This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

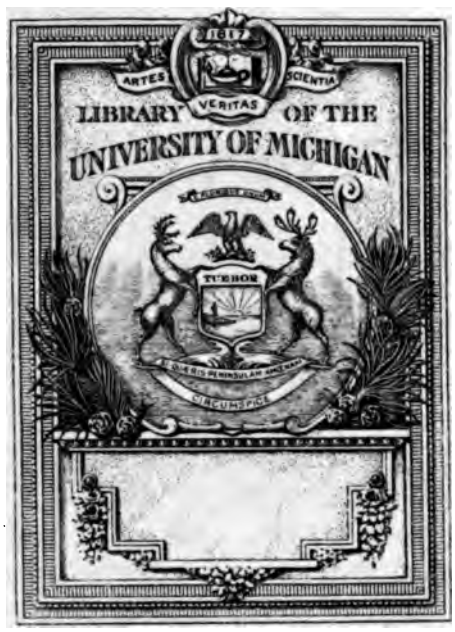
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

B 1,349,327


ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR

828
T49
G55

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH THOREAU

W.M

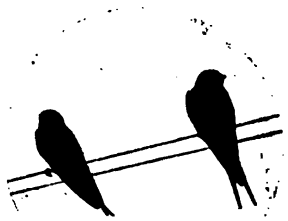
SITE OF THOREAU'S HOUSE AT WALDEN POND

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH THOREAU

BY

HERBERT W. GLEASON

SKETCHES
OF NATURE FROM THE WRITINGS OF
Henry D. Thoreau
WITH CORRESPONDING PHOTOGRAPHIC
ILLUSTRATIONS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1917

COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.
COPYRIGHT, 1917, BY HERBERT W. GLEASON

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Published July 1917

"There is no flower so sweet as the four-petalled flower which science much neglects; one grey petal it has, one green, one red, and one white."

EMERSON.

317026

PREFACE

THOREAU writes in his journal, under date of December 10, 1856: "It is remarkable how suggestive the slightest drawing as a memento of things seen. For a few years past I have been accustomed to make a rude sketch in my journal of plants, ice, and various natural phenomena, and though the fullest accompanying description may fail to recall my experience, these rude outline drawings do not fail to carry me back to that time and scene. It is as if I saw the same thing again, and I may again attempt to describe it in words if I choose."

The present volume is an endeavor to go a step beyond Thoreau's sketches and to reproduce, with the aid of photographs, some of the outdoor scenes and natural phenomena in which he delighted and which he has so graphically described. The series of views is limited, of necessity, but a sufficient number are given to illustrate Thoreau's method of nature-study as well as to emphasize anew the accuracy and felicity of his nature-descriptions. It is hoped, also, that this combination of verbal and pictorial representation will stimulate to a wider apprehension and a more vivid realization of the Beautiful in Nature, — thus continuing, in a measure, Thoreau's self-appointed mission.

Variety has been sought, first of all, in the selection of subjects, though obviously many of Thoreau's favorite themes could not be included, — being beyond the scope of the camera, — such as the music of the telegraph harp, the crowing of chanticleer, the fragrance of sweet-fern, the chirping of crickets, the flavor of wild apples, the "*z*-ing" of locusts, etc. In the arrangement of subjects the course of the seasons has been followed, although it has not been possible always to keep an exact succession of dates.

The quotations are chiefly from the *Journal*, the page numbers referring to the Walden Edition of 1906. It has not been deemed necessary to indicate in every case where an ellipsis occurs. The journal being largely a commonplace-book, Thoreau would occasionally interject comments quite remote from the subject in hand; and therefore, in order to secure greater simplicity and conciseness, sometimes a brief portion of the original journal entry is here omitted. In two or three instances, also, a very slight verbal alteration has been made.

In reading these journal extracts it should be remembered that they were never considered by Thoreau as finished literature. They were frequently written hurriedly, with his own convenience solely in view, and left for final polishing and arrangement at some later date. Yet this very fact adds a flavor of sincerity and piquancy to the journal which would perhaps have been lost in a studied preparation, with

more attention given to proportion and correlation. Thoreau himself says, "I do not know but thoughts written down thus in a journal might be printed in the same form with greater advantage than if the related ones were brought together into separate essays."

With respect to the photographs, it may be said that they were taken by the author with the sole purpose of securing, in every case, as close a correspondence as possible with Thoreau's description. Artistic considerations were wholly secondary.

Boston, *April*, 1917.

CONTENTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Site of Thoreau's House at Walden Pond *Frontispiece*

INTRODUCTION

Thoreau's Journals
At the Leaning Hemlocks
From Crest of Fair Haven Hill across River to Conantum
Up River and Down River from Hubbard's Bridge
Thoreau's Cove, Walden Pond
Walden Pond in May and in December
Spaulding's Farm and Cranberry Meadow

SPRING:

Sand Foliage 2
Willow Catkins 4
Skunk-Cabbage 6
Winkle-like Fungi 6
The Old Marlborough Road (poem) 8
Crossbills at the Leaning Hemlocks 10
Cowslips 12
Houstonias 14
Mayflowers 16
Wood Anemones 16
Rabbits and Partridges (Rabbit in grass) 18
A Partridge Nest 18
Bird-foot Violets 20
Fringed Polygala 20
May Foliage 22
Barn Swallow 24
Vesper Sparrow (Bay-wing) 24

Apple Blossoms 26
Beauty of Wild Apples 26
Loring's Pond 28
A Lilac Bush — the Last Remnant of a Home . . 28
Rhodora 30
Wild Pink 30
Ferns in the Woods 32
Flowering Dogwood 32

SUMMER:

Pincushion Galls 36
A Nighthawk's Nest 36
Red-winged Blackbirds and Nest 38
Clintonia 40
Early Morning Fog from Nawshawtuct Hill . . 42
Buttercups by the Roadside 44
Lupines 44
Lady's-slippers 46
Wild Calla Lily 46
Great Fringed Orchis 48
White Pond 50
Mountain Laurel 50
Trees reflected in the River 52
Wild Roses 54
Water-Lilies 56
Orientation of Young Pine Shoots 58
A June Landscape from Fair Haven Hill . . . 60
White Clover 60
Tarbell's Spring 62
A Waving Rye-field 64
Yellow and Red Lilies 66
An Old Unfrequented Road 68

Blueberries and Huckleberries 70
Yew Berry 72
Rattlesnake-plantain 72
Rose Mallow 74
Cinnamon Ferns in Clintonia Swamp . . . 76

AUTUMN:

Beautiful Fungi 80
Lane in front of Tarbell's 82
Sunset on the River 84
Goldenrod 86
Fall Asters 88
Witch-hazel 90
October Reflections on the Assabet 92
Sun-lighted Tufts of Andropogon 92
Cobweb Drapery in Barrett's Mill 94
Fringed Gentian 96
Fallen Leaves 98
Late Green Ferns 100
Polypody 100
Nature's Decoration of an Old Stump 102
November Woods 104
Fair Haven Bay through the Woods 106
Shrub Oak Leaves 108

WINTER:

A Winter Scene from Lee's Cliff 112
Frost Crystals 114
Architecture of the Snow 116
Tracks in the Snow 118
After the Ice Storm 120
Heavy Snow on Pitch Pines 122

The Swamp in Winter 124
A Lodging Snow 126
The Brook in Winter 128
The River as a Winter Highway 128
The Tracks of a Fox 130
Icicle "Organ-Pipes" 132
North Branch near Harrington's 132
Winter (poem) 134

INTRODUCTION

"Above man's aims his nature rose.
The wisdom of a just content
Made one small spot a continent,
And tuned to poetry life's prose."

HENRY DAVID THOREAU was born in Concord, Massachusetts, July 12, 1817, and died there, May 6, 1862. With the exception of brief periods of absence during childhood and youth, a few excursions in adult years to the Maine Woods, the White Mountains, Cape Cod, Quebec, and other easily reached localities, and one longer trip to Minnesota in 1861 in the effort to recover his health, his whole life was spent within the limits of his native town. This was a distinction in which he rejoiced. "I cannot but regard it," he says, "as a kindness in those who have the steering of me that, by the want of pecuniary wealth, I have been nailed down to this my native region so long and steadily, and made to study and love this spot of earth more and more. What would signify in comparison a thin and diffused love and knowledge of the whole earth instead, got by wandering?" And yet there are intimations here and there in his journal that he would have delighted in extensive travel abroad. Few men have ever lived who possessed so keen an appreciation of the attractiveness of the out-

ward world, and few have been so thoroughly alive to the advantages of world-wide travel. But this experience was denied him, and all he could say was, "I have travelled a great deal — in Concord."

And Thoreau's travels were to some purpose. They did not terminate with his own enjoyment. For the greater part of his life he kept a careful and extended record of his daily excursions and observations, accompanied with a multitude of first-hand — often elaborate — moral and philosophical meditations and generalizations, all written in a chaste and picturesque style, and all intended to serve a literary purpose. Thoreau's vocation was that of a writer, — he had as many trades, he declared, as he had fingers, but literature was his chosen field, — and all his activity, whether bodily or mental, was devoted to this one end. Thirty-seven good-sized closely written volumes[1] contain the story of his "travels," while other volumes, previously written, were used in the making-up of the two books which were published during his lifetime, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*,

[1] With regard to these manuscript volumes, Thoreau's complaint will be recalled: "I cannot easily buy a blank book to write thoughts in; they are all ruled for dollars and cents!" Channing tells us that, in consequence of this difficulty, Thoreau was accustomed to purchase blank paper and bind up his journals to suit himself. He was extremely economical in the use of his material, oftentimes writing on the backs of old letters and crowding his journal pages with notes. In one case, however (as shown in the photograph reproduced herewith), there was a conspicuous departure from this rule, for he devotes an entire page to the single entry: "Feb. 3d. Five minutes before 3 P.M. Father died."

and *Walden*. It was from this storehouse, also, that the books entitled *Excursions*, *The Maine Woods*, and *Cape Cod*, were prepared, partly by Thoreau himself and partly by his literary executors; and when Thoreau's complete works were published for the first time, in 1906, the *Journal* filled fourteen of the twenty volumes.[1] "For a long time," he once wrote, "I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never yet seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions, and, as is too common with writers, I got only my labor for my pains. However, in this case my pains were their own reward." "Pains" for Thoreau, doubtless, but great satisfaction, delight, and inspiration for thousands of readers in after years.

In his studies afield Thoreau sought to cover a wide range of subjects, — botany, zoölogy, geology, archæology, etc., — while in writing up his notes he combined the ethical, the æsthetic, and the scientific with the literary. Naturally, such a voluminous produc-

[1] As indicating the lack of appreciation on the part of his fellow townsmen toward Thoreau, the following incident was told the writer by the late Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Travelling one day on the railway with Judge E. Rockwood Hoar, an eminent citizen of Concord, Colonel Higginson happened to remark that there was some likelihood of Henry Thoreau's journals being published. "Henry Thoreau's journals?" exclaimed Judge Hoar. "Pray tell me, who on earth would care to read Henry Thoreau's journals?" The answer to Judge Hoar's query was found in the fact that when these journals in their complete form were first announced for publication (with some misgivings, it is said, on the part of the publishers), the entire edition was subscribed for before half the volumes were printed.

tion, made up of contributions from such a variety of sources, often written hastily and without revision, is not free from defects; but they are defects which are easily passed over by the discriminating reader in the face of so much that bears the hall-mark of genius. Thoreau's journal may be compared to a choice Turkish rug, of original, intricate, and yet admittedly beautiful pattern. The lines of the pattern do not all run geometrically true, and occasionally, here and there, a strand appears which is not quite in tune with its surroundings. Notwithstanding, the pattern is singularly consistent, harmonious, and satisfying, every feature contributing faithfully to the unity of the design. The colors are fast, even when subjected to the most rigorous tests; there is no needless fringe or superficial lustre; while in point of durability, it promises to outlast a thousand rugs of the ordinary sort.

Thoreau's interest, in all his outdoor studies, was centred chiefly upon *life*. The rocks and ledges held his attention only as they revealed a story of change. Thawing sand overflowing the snow was to him a welcome token of Nature's vitality. He delighted in running brooks, but stagnant pools were of value only as mirrors for the living landscape. November, with its bareness and desolateness, was the hardest month of the year for him to get through. As for museums, with their stuffed specimens, he positively hated them — "catacombs of nature." He felt compelled to visit

THOREAU'S JOURNALS

them at rare intervals to get confirmation for some of his scientific observations, but he queries, "What right have mortals to parade these things on their legs again, with their wires, and, when heaven has decreed that they shall return to dust again, to return them to sawdust?" and he affirms, "I have had my right-perceiving senses so disturbed in these haunts as to mistake a veritable living man for a stuffed specimen, and surveyed him with dumb wonder as the strangest of the whole collection." Thoreau was a naturalist of the best type, but he was no "collector." In Emerson's phrase, he "named all the birds without a gun, loved the wood-rose and left it on its stalk." Once when a farmer came to him and offered to him as a naturalist a two-headed calf which his cow had brought forth, Thoreau was utterly disgusted and began to catechize himself, asking what enormity he had committed that such an offer should be made to him!

And not merely life, but *human* life was the thing of greatest concern in his estimation, around which everything else must revolve. "Nature must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all," he declares; "that is, her scenes must be associated with humane affections, such as are associated with one's native place, for instance. A lover of Nature is preëminently a lover of man." "I am not interested in mere phenomena, though it were the explosion of a planet, only as it may have lain in the experience of a human being." And once more: "Nature is beautiful only as

a place where a life is to be lived. It is not beautiful to him who has not resolved on a beautiful life." Never was greater mistake made than to charge Thoreau with being a misanthrope. His aloofness from men and his contempt for the conventionalities of society were due to the fact that his ideals were so much higher than those which he found generally prevailing. One of his most pregnant utterances is quoted by Dr. Edward Emerson, himself a boy-friend of Thoreau's: "If I do not keep step with others it is because I hear a different drummer. Let a man step to the music which he hears, however measured and however far away."

Thoreau's glorification of Concord — not historical or literary or social or agricultural Concord, but *outdoor* Concord — is the supreme compelling feature of his journal writing. No writer in all literature has so exalted the place of his birth and recorded so fully and so entertainingly its manifold attractions. Gilbert White of Selborne is a remote second. And Thoreau was absolutely sincere. "I have never got over my surprise," he writes, "that I should be born into the most estimable place in the world, and in the very nick of time too." Winter and summer, day and night, through cold and heat, he explored the fields and woods and water-courses of Concord, rejoicing in the recurrence of the seasons, and invariably returning with new treasures of beauty or interest for his journal record. "I take all these walks to every point of

the compass, and it is always harvest-time with me. I am always gathering my crop from these woods and fields and waters, and no man is in my way or interferes with me." So intimate was his relation with these outdoor surroundings and the fleeting phenomena of the year that he could say, "These regular phenomena of the seasons get at last to be simply and plainly phenomena or phases of my life. Almost I believe the Concord River would not rise and overflow its banks again, were I not here." He illustrated absolutely his own dictum ("To insure health, a man's relation to Nature must come very near to a personal one; he must be conscious of a friendliness in her; when human friends fail or die, she must stand in the gap to him. I cannot conceive of any life which deserves the name, unless there is a certain tender relation to Nature. This it is which makes winter warm, and supplies society in the desert and wilderness." He was ever "looking into nature with such easy sympathy as the blue-eyed grass in the meadow looks in the face of the sky.")

One cannot escape the impression, in reading Thoreau's *Journal*, that he considered Concord's resources in the realm of nature-study practically boundless. He was continually noting correspondences between the phenomena of his limited environment and those of foreign climes. Emerson records that on returning a borrowed volume of Kane's *Arctic Explorations*, he remarked that "most of the phenomena noted might

be observed in Concord." Sometimes this extolling of his native region was too much for the patience of his listeners. One lady — the mother of Senator Hoar — complained, "Henry talks about Nature just as if she had been born and brought up in Concord." (This remark, of course, was intended as a mild criticism, but Concord people to-day are inclined to view it as really involving a threefold compliment: a compliment to the speaker for her unconscious discernment of Thoreau's genius, a compliment to Thoreau for his lofty appreciation of Nature, and a compliment to Nature herself as indicating her good sense in being willing to be born and brought up in Concord!)

It is not necessary, however, to assume that Nature wears a special halo in Concord. Doubtless Mr. Emerson was correct in saying: "I think his fancy for referring everything to the meridian of Concord did not grow out of any ignorance or depreciation of other longitudes or latitudes, but was rather a playful expression of his conviction of the indifferency of all places, and that the best place for each is where he stands. He expressed it once in this wise: 'I think nothing is to be hoped from you, if this bit of mould under your feet is not sweeter to you to eat than any other in this world, or in any world.'" Or, as Thoreau said in another place: "Think of the consummate folly of attempting to go away from *here!* When the constant endeavor should be to get nearer and nearer *here.* Take the shortest way round and stay at home.

AT THE LEANING HEMLOCKS

A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in its calyx, like an acorn in its cup."

The simple facts are these. Concord is a typical New England town. Outside of the village which clusters around the post-office, court-house, and churches, the inhabitants are chiefly farmers, who preserve much of the simplicity of early colonial days — or they did in Thoreau's time — while considerable areas of land still remain uncultivated. In its landscape features Concord presents a pleasing combination of field and meadow, hill and dale, lake and river, swamp and woodland. In the spring and summer there is everywhere a luxuriance of floral and animal life, varied and lovely; in autumn there are the brilliant tints of departing foliage and an abundance of fruits; in winter there is the soft purity of the snow and the delicate beauty of frost crystals. The visitor to Concord at any season of the year does not need to discount Thoreau's enthusiasm to appreciate the true charm of his surroundings. To be sure, the hills of Concord are tame as compared with those found in many towns of northern and western New England, yet the views from their summits are peculiarly picturesque and appealing. Not long ago the writer piloted to the crest of Fair Haven Hill — one of Thoreau's dearest shrines — an English friend with whom he had recently been mountain-climbing in the Canadian Rockies. This friend, a world-wide traveller and an alpinist of international fame, notwithstanding

that he was fresh from scenes of superlative grandeur in the Canadian Alps, was enthusiastic over the view from this little hill, declaring it one of the most beautiful he had ever seen. After all, Thoreau's comment applies to any view, from whatever summit: "There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate, — not a grain more"; and if he could see more from Annursnack Hill than most people can see from the top of Pike's Peak, — why, the simple truth is that he was better prepared to appreciate what he saw.

The years which have passed since Thoreau wrote the last page in his journal have witnessed many changes in Concord — some of which he would have welcomed but most of which he would have deplored. White Pond and the Leaning Hemlocks were long ago "prophaned" by the railway. Baker Farm, Lee's Hill, Conantum, Fair Haven Hill, Nashawtuc, Punkatasset, Bear Hill, and Three Friends' Hill are crowned by sumptuous private residences. Large areas over which Thoreau used to roam, exulting in their wildness and freedom, are now placarded everywhere with the forbidding sign "No Trespassing." Clamshell Bank, that priceless (to him) relic of Indian days, comes within the domain of a large hospital. The J. P. Brown Farm now belongs to the Concord Country Club, and its extensive grass lands in which Thoreau took peculiar delight have been converted into an elaborate golf course, Nut Meadow Brook, which

FROM CREST OF FAIR HAVEN HILL ACROSS RIVER TO CONANTUM

flows through the centre, forming a notable hazard. Flint's Pond has been made a source of water-supply for Lincoln and Concord, and Bateman's Pond is staked out with a rowing course for a boys' private school near by. Thoreau and his co-saunterer Channing were desperately aggrieved one day to find that "a new staring house" had been erected just beyond Hubbard's Bridge, "thereby doing irreparable injury to a large section of country for walkers." "It obliges us," he complained, "to take still more steps after weary ones to reach the secluded fields and woods," and they talked of petitioning the owner to remove the house and thus abate a nuisance. What would the two friends say to-day on finding the same house, not only greatly enlarged and made still more conspicuous, but surrounded by a whole cluster of similar ornate dwellings? And then looking in the opposite direction, imagine their indignation on beholding the sacred slopes of Fair Haven Hill taken up with "gentlemen's estates," with their lawns, gardens, and tennis courts!

But there has been one compensation for this private appropriation of choice portions of the landscape. "No Shooting" is a more frequent sign than "No Trespassing," and these extensive estates thus guarded are proving places of refuge for many forms of wild life which in Thoreau's day were the free booty of unrestrained hunters. Partridges and gray squirrels are multiplying, pheasants (lately introduced)

are thriving, rabbits rear their young undisturbed, and even deer have been repeatedly seen in Concord within recent years, — the last-named a circumstance which Thoreau would have rejoiced to record in letters of gold.

There are, however, many sections of Concord which remain in practically the same state of wildness which made them so attractive to Thoreau, and one can easily find the same birds and flowers and witness the same phenomena of the advancing seasons. Best of all, Walden Pond — the one locality in Concord which is most closely associated with Thoreau in the public mind — is little changed from what it was when Thoreau built his famous hut by its shore and there lived the unique hermit life of which he has given so full an account in *Walden*. For a number of years the Fitchburg Railroad took advantage of its proximity to the pond to exploit it as a picnic resort, and every summer thousands of people were brought to its shores to enjoy "a day off": boating on the pond, swinging in the pines, patronizing the lemonade-stands and bowling-alleys, and then going away and leaving the usual assortment of lunch-boxes, waste paper, peanut-shells, etc., — the whole a proceeding which would surely have brought sorrow to Thoreau's heart. But there came a blissful day when the picnic buildings burned up, and they were never replaced, so that once more the pond assumed its serene attitude and has retained it ever since. Much

UP RIVER AND DOWN RIVER FROM HUBBARD'S BRIDGE

of the preservation of the beauty of Walden is due to the "Emerson children" (Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson and Mrs. Edith Emerson Forbes), who own a great portion of the land bordering the pond and are determined that no changes shall take place so long as it is in their control.

Close by the site of Thoreau's hut, at the head of the "Deep Cove," there has been erected a huge cairn of stones, each visitor to the spot contributing a stone to the pile. This commemorative idea originated with Bronson Alcott, the Concord philosopher, whose axe Thoreau borrowed when he began the construction of his hut, and whom he afterwards described as "the man of most faith of any alive." Alcott's tribute to Thoreau has often been quoted:—

> "Much do they wrong our Henry wise and kind,
> Morose who name thee, cynical to men,
> Forsaking manners civil and refined
> To build thyself in Walden woods a den, —
> Then flout society, flatter the rude hind.
> We better knew thee, loyal citizen!
> Thou, friendship's all-adventuring pioneer,
> Civility itself would civilize."

There is an indescribable charm about the scenery of New England which is most keenly felt by those whose early life has been passed under its spell. It was the lot of the writer to be exiled (speaking subjectively) from New England for a period of some sixteen years, this period being spent in the State of Minnesota. There was much of interest found in

the new surroundings; but the fertility of the prairies, the wide reach of the primitive forests, the novelty and affluence of the wild flowers and birds, did not prevent an occasional craving for the sight of a bit of New England barrenness, — such as a rocky pasture, bounded by stone walls and dotted with creeping junipers, or a few of New England's commonest flowers, — buttercups, or houstonias, or ox-eye daisies. It was at this time that the writer first became acquainted with the portions of Thoreau's journal published in the eighties by his friend, Mr. H. G. O. Blake; and the reading of these, with their vivid delineation of characteristic New England scenes, sacredly cherished in memory, aroused a passionate longing to visit the region so intimately described by Thoreau and enjoy a ramble among his beloved haunts. Consequently, at the close of the "exile" above noted, an early opportunity was seized to visit Concord, with camera in hand, and many photographic mementos were taken of localities associated with Thoreau. But this was only the beginning. During the fifteen years succeeding, the writer has made frequent pilgrimages to Concord, under all conditions of season and weather, searching out places and objects described by Thoreau, treading in his footsteps so far as they were discoverable, and bringing back photographs of all that was most interesting.[1] Out of many hundred views thus taken

[1] Lest any should assume that the fondness for New England scenery

THOREAU'S COVE, WALDEN POND

a brief series is chosen for reproduction in this volume.

Some of the experiences in connection with these Concord excursions are perhaps worth noting.

First of all, they were self-rewarding, entirely apart from their historical or personal interest. A breezy walk over Concord meadows or uplands far exceeds in exhilaration and inspiration any afternoon upon a golf course or any conceivable trip in a motor-car.

Confirmation was found again and again of Thoreau's descriptive accuracy. Certain flowers, for example, were traced unerringly merely from his journal notes.

Confirmation, likewise, of the thoroughness of his observations in the field was frequently noted. Repeatedly upon these rambles some scene or object was photographed simply because it seemed to possess exceptional interest, without reference to any relation which it might have to Thoreau, and then afterwards it was found that the identical scene or object was carefully described in his journal. Very few facts in the realm of natural history escaped his recording pen.

here avowed is due to a lack of acquaintance with other regions more famous for their grandeur, it may be stated that during this same period the writer made two trips to Alaska, six to California and the Pacific Coast, three to the Grand Cañon of Arizona, seven to the Canadian Rockies, two to Yellowstone Park, and three to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Yet, after every one of these trips, it was a genuine delight to return to the simple beauty of New England.

Still another confirmation, of a different sort, was found in the duplication of Thoreau's experience with regard to the solitariness of his walks. More than once he comments upon this. "There are said to be two thousand inhabitants in Concord, and yet I find such ample space and verge, even miles of walking every day in which I do not meet nor see a human being, and often not very recent traces of them. Methinks that for a great part of the time, as much as it is possible, I walk as one possessing the advantages of human culture, fresh from the society of men, but turned loose in the woods, the only man in nature, walking and meditating to a great extent as if man and his customs and institutions were not." It seems strange, but it is a fact, that during all these fifteen years of frequent rambling among the fields and woods of Concord the writer has never yet met with a single other person bent upon a similar errand. This, of course, merely happened so; we did not chance to meet, that is all. The "Walking Association" of Concord has not yet disbanded, and it is not fair to conclude that Thoreau's gospel of the outdoor life which he so vigorously preached has been wholly lost upon the residents of his native town.

There was a peculiar fascination in hunting down localities to which Thoreau had given names after an arbitrary method of his own, and without any regard whatever for their possible recognition by

WALDEN POND IN MAY AND IN DECEMBER

other people. Ripple Lake, Cardinal Shore, Bittern Cliff, Owl-Nest Swamp, Arethusa Meadow, Curly-Pate Hill, Purple Utricularia Bay, Bidens Brook, Hubbard's Close, — these and many similar names are capitalized and otherwise dignified in his journal records just as if he were speaking of London or Paris or New York. But where were these places? It was useless to appeal to residents of Concord. They might as well have been situated in Siberia or Patagonia. Even persons still living who had known Thoreau personally and had occasionally been with him on some of his walks were hopelessly in the dark as to most of them. Ellery Channing, author of a life of Thoreau, and his most frequent walking companion, who lingered forty years after the death of his friend and associate, was appealed to in connection with two or three localities, but his memory was afterwards proved to be sadly at fault.

It was only by a careful comparison of all the journal references to each locality, the examination of a large number of Thoreau's manuscript surveys preserved in the Concord Library, and especially by following out on the ground Thoreau's tramps afield, that finally the greater number of these localities were identified.

One amusing incident occurred in connection with the effort to locate "Spaulding's Farm." Readers of the volume entitled *Excursions* will perhaps recall that Thoreau makes this farm the subject of one of

his most notable parables: "I took a walk on Spaulding's Farm the other afternoon. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood as into some noble hall. I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable and shining family had settled there in that part of the land called Concord, unknown to me. I saw their park, their pleasure-ground, beyond through the wood, in Spaulding's cranberry meadow," etc. But the most diligent inquiry failed to locate this place. Finally, a good lady of Concord came to the rescue. She said, "I know an old man who used to drive a butcher's cart through this part of the country, and he will know if anybody does." So, meeting him shortly after, she said, "Mr. D., can you tell me where Spaulding's Farm used to be in Concord?" "Spaulding's Farm?" — the old man thought a moment. "There never was any such place in Concord, ma'am." "But Henry Thoreau says there was, in his journal." "Henry Thoreau?" — with an expression of undisguised contempt — "I knew Henry Thoreau ever since he was a boy, and I never had much of an opinion of him. *And I hain't seen nothing since to change my mind!*"

But Spaulding's Farm was eventually discovered, — not in Concord, but in Carlisle, the village just to the north which used to be a part of Concord, — and a visit to the farm proved most interesting. The

SPAULDING'S FARM AND CRANBERRY MEADOW

old homestead, aged two hundred years, still stands; the "cranberry meadow" was readily found, but the "stately pine wood" long since fell before the axe. It must have been a magnificent grove, judging from the size of the stumps which still remain. Needless to say, no vestiges of the "altogether admirable and shining family" were discovered, but Thoreau would doubtless find, if he were living to-day, that they had simply removed their domicile to some other part of Concord.

It is curious to note how little Thoreau was esteemed by most of his fellow villagers. He was commonly regarded as a sort of ne'er-do-well, squandering his time in roaming over the fields and up and down the river, rarely shooting or fishing, and with no sensible object in view. To be sure, he sometimes did a job at surveying or whitewashing or fence-building, and he helped his father occasionally at pencil-making; but that he actually had a "profession" — such an idea could not be tolerated for a moment. Yet Thoreau had a profession, and this is his own statement of it: —

"*My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in Nature, to know his lurking places, to watch for and describe all the divine features which I can detect in Nature.*"

This profession he followed faithfully and unswervingly. Nothing more deeply impresses itself upon the mind of one who reads Thoreau's *Journal* sympathetically, especially if that reading be in the

atmosphere of the scenes which he describes, than the conviction that Thoreau possessed a profoundly *religious* nature. He would not have chosen the adjective, but it is abundantly evident that his walks afield were to him religious excursions, — seasons of communion with the Unseen. To quote a modern phrase, he was ever seeking to be "in tune with the Infinite." That was a significant remark which he made upon his dying bed to his aunt, who, with kindly intent, urged him to "make his peace with God." He simply said, "I have never quarreled with Him." Notwithstanding his misjudged criticism of the churches and his intolerance of creeds, he possessed a creed of his own, and it is well worth quoting: —

"I know that I am. I know that Another is who knows more than I, who takes interest in me, whose creature, and yet whose kindred, in one sense, am I. I know that the enterprise is worthy. I know that things work well. I have heard no bad news."

If we were to search for the crowning moral of Thoreau's life and writings, perhaps we could find it nowhere more truly or more beautifully expressed than in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, his neighbor and friend: —

"The rounded world is fair to see,
Nine times folded in mystery:
Though baffled seers cannot impart
The secret of its laboring heart,
Throb *thine* with Nature's throbbing breast,
And all is clear from east to west."

I. SPRING

SAND FOLIAGE

FEW phenomena gave me more delight than to observe the forms which thawing sand and clay assume in flowing down the sides of a deep cut [1] on the railroad through which I passed on my way to the village, a phenomenon not very common on so large a scale, though the number of freshly exposed banks of the right material must have been greatly multiplied since railroads were invented. The material was sand of every degree of fineness and of various rich colors, commonly mixed with a little clay. When the frost comes out in the spring, and even in a thawing day in the winter, the sand begins to flow down the slopes like lava, sometimes bursting out through the snow and overflowing it where no sand was to be seen before. Innumerable little streams overlap and interlace one with another, exhibiting a sort of hybrid product, which obeys half way the law of currents, and half way that of vegetation. . . . It is truly a *grotesque* vegetation, whose forms and color we see imitated in bronze, a sort of architectural foliage more ancient and typical than acanthus, chiccory, ivy, vine, or any vegetable leaves.

Walden, 336, 337.

[1] The "Deep Cut" was despoiled of its magnitude some years ago, a large section of its easterly bank being removed for grading purposes elsewhere. Sufficient of the original sand-and-clay formation still remains, however, to furnish annually the same unique phenomenon in which Thoreau delighted. H. W. G.

MARCH 2, 1854. The sand foliage is vital in its form, reminding me of what are called the vitals of the animal body. I am not sure that its arteries are ever hollow. They are rather meandering channels with remarkably distinct sharp edges, formed instantaneously as by magic. How rapidly and perfectly it organizes itself! . . . On the outside all the life of the earth is expressed in the animal or vegetable, but make a deep cut in it and you find it vital; you find in the very sands an anticipation of the vegetable leaf. No wonder, then, that plants grow and spring in it. The atoms have already learned the law. Let a vegetable sap convey it upwards and you have a vegetable leaf. No wonder that the earth expresses itself outwardly in leaves, which labors with the idea thus inwardly. The overhanging leaf sees here its prototype.

Journal, VI, 148.

WILLOW CATKINS

MARCH 2, 1859. The willow catkins by the railroad have now all crept out about an eighth of an inch, giving to the bushes already a very pretty appearance when you stand on the sunny side, the silvery-white specks contrasting with the black scales. Seen along the twigs, they are somewhat like small pearl buttons on a waistcoat. Go and measure to what length the silvery willow catkins have crept out beyond their scales, if you would know what time o' the year it is by Nature's clock.

Journal, XII, 4.

MARCH 20, 1858. At Hubbard's wall, how handsome the willow catkins! Those wonderfully bright silvery buttons, so regularly disposed in oval schools in the air, or, if you please, along the seams which their twigs make, in all degrees of forwardness, from the faintest, tiniest speck of silver, just peeping from beneath the black scales, to lusty pussies which have thrown off their scaly coats and show some redness at base on a close inspection. These fixed swarms of arctic buds spot the air very prettily along the hedges. They remind me somewhat by their brilliancy of the snow-flecks which are so bright by contrast at this season when the sun is high. Is not this, perhaps, the earliest, most obvious, awakening of vegetable life?

Journal, X, 310.

APRIL 11, 1856. You take your way along the edge of some swamp that has been cleared at the base of some south hillside, where there is sufficient light and air and warmth, but the cold northerly winds are fended off, and there behold the silvery catkins of the sallows, which have already crept along their lusty osiers, more than an inch in length, till they look like silvery wands, though some are more rounded, like bullets. The lower part of some catkins which have lost their bud-scales emit a tempered crimson blush through their down, from the small scales within. The catkins grow longer and larger as you advance into the warmest localities, till at last you discover one catkin in which the reddish anthers are beginning to push from one side near the end, and you know that a little yellow flame will have burst out there by to-morrow, if the day is fair.

Journal, VIII, 276.

SKUNK-CABBAGE

MARCH 18, 1860. I examine the skunk-cabbage, now generally and abundantly in bloom all along under Clamshell. It is a flower, as it were, without a leaf. All that you see is a stout beaked hood just rising above the dead brown grass in the springy ground now, where it has felt the heat, under some south bank. The single enveloping leaf, or "spathe," is all the flower that you see commonly, and those are as variously colored as tulips and of similar color, — from a very dark almost black mahogany to a light yellow streaked or freckled with mahogany. It is a leaf simply folded around the flower, with its top like a bird's beak bent over it for its further protection, evidently to keep off wind and frost, with a sharp angle down its back. These various colors are seen close together, and their beaks are bent in various directions.

Journal, XIII, 199.

WINKLE-LIKE FUNGI

APRIL 13, 1854. Saw an old log, stripped of bark, either poplar or maple, four feet long, — its whole upper half covered with that handsome winkle-like fungus. They are steel-colored and of a velvety appearance, somewhat semicircular, with concentric growths of different shades, passing from quite black

within through a slaty-blue to (at present) a buff edge. Beneath cream-color. There are many minute ones a tenth of an inch in diameter, the shell-like leaf or ear springing from one side. The full-grown are sometimes united into one leaf for eight or nine inches in one level along the log, tier above tier, with a scalloped edge. They are handsomest when two or more are opposed, meeting at their bases, and make a concentric circle. They remind you of shells, also of butterflies. The great variety and regularity of the shading are very interesting. They spring from a slight base, rising by a narrow neck. They grow on stumps and other dead wood on land, even driftwood left high, just as some marine shells, their relatives, grow on driftwood.

Journal, VI, 196.

THE OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD

WHEN the spring stirs my blood
With the instinct to travel,
I can get enough gravel
On the Old Marlborough Road.
Nobody repairs it,
For nobody wears it;
It is a living way,
As the Christians say.
Not many there be
Who enter therein,
Only the guests of the
Irishman Quin.
What is it, what is it,
But a direction out there,
And the bare possibility
Of going somewhere?
Great guideboards of stone,
But travellers none;
Cenotaphs of the towns
Named on their crowns.
It is worth going to see
Where you *might* be.
What king
Did the thing,
I am still wondering;
Set up how or when,
By what selectmen,

Gourgas or Lee,
Clark or Darby?
They're a great endeavor
To be something forever;
Blank tablets of stone,
Where a traveller might groan,
And in one sentence
Grave all that is known;
Which another might read,
In his extreme need.
I know one or two
Lines that would do,
Literature that might stand
All over the land,
Which a man could remember
Till next December,
And read again in the spring,
After the thawing.

If with fancy unfurled
  You leave your abode,
You may go round the world
  By the Old Marlborough Road.

Excursions, 215.

CROSSBILLS AT THE LEANING HEMLOCKS

APRIL 13, 1860. As I was paddling [up the Assabet] past the uppermost hemlocks I saw two peculiar and plump birds near me on the bank there which reminded me of the cow blackbird and of the oriole at first. I saw at once that they were new to me, and guessed that they were crossbills,[1] which was the case, — male and female. The former was dusky-greenish (through a glass), orange, and red, the orange, etc., on head, breast, and rump, the vent white; dark, large bill; the female more of a dusky slate-color, and yellow instead of orange and red. They were very busily eating the seeds of the hemlock, whose cones were strewn on the ground, and they were very fearless, allowing me to approach quite near. . . . They were very parrot-like both in color (especially the male, greenish and orange, etc.) and in their manner of feeding, — holding the hemlock cones in one claw and rapidly extracting the seeds with their bills, thus trying one cone after another very fast. But they kept their bills a-going so that, near as they were, I did not distinguish the cross. I should have looked at them in profile. At last the two hopped within six feet of me, and one within four feet, and

[1] The crossbills photographed were found near the "Leaning Hemlocks," — the identical locality noted by Thoreau, — only they were of the white-winged species, while the birds Thoreau saw were evidently red crossbills. The occurrence of either species in Concord is still a rare event. H. W. G.

they were coming still nearer, as if partly from curiosity, though nibbling the cones all the while, when my chain fell down and rattled loudly, — for the wind shook the boat, — and they flew off a rod. In Bechstein I read that "it frequents fir and pine woods, but only when there are abundance of the cones." It may be that the abundance of white pine cones last fall had to do with their coming here. The hemlock cones were very abundant too, methinks.

Journal, XIII, 245, 246.

COWSLIPS

APRIL 6, 1853. To Second Division Brook. One cowslip, though it shows the yellow, is not *fairly* out, but will be by to-morrow. How they improve their time! Not a moment of sunshine lost. One thing I may depend on: there has been no idling with the flowers. They advance as steadily as a clock. Nature loses not a moment, takes no vacation. These plants, now protected by the water, just peeping forth. I should not be surprised to find that they drew in their heads in a frosty night.

Journal, v, 98.

APRIL 11, 1856. I might have said on the 8th: Behold that little hemisphere of green in the black and sluggish brook, amid the open alders, sheltered under a russet tussock. It is the cowslips' forward green. Look narrowly, explore the warmest nooks; here are buds larger yet, showing more yellow, and yonder see two full-blown yellow disks, close to the water's edge. Methinks they dip into it when the frosty nights come.

Journal, VIII, 276.

April 29, 1852. The season is most forward at the Second Division Brook, where the cowslip is in blossom, — and nothing yet planted at home, — these bright-yellow *suns* of the meadow, in rich clusters, their flowers contrasting with the green leaves, from amidst the all-producing, dark-bottomed water. A flower-fire bursting up, as if through crevices in the meadow. They are very rich, seen in the meadow where they grow, and the most conspicuous flower at present, but held in the hand they are rather coarse. But their yellow and green are really rich, and in the meadow they are the most delicate objects. Their bright yellow is something incredible when first beheld.

Journal, III, 479, 480.

HOUSTONIAS

April 24, 1853. Houstonias. How affecting that, annually at this season, as surely as the sun takes a higher course in the heavens, this pure and simple little flower peeps out and spots the great globe with white in our America, its four little white or bluish petals on a slender stalk making a delicate flower about a third of an inch in diameter! What a significant, though faint, utterance of spring through the veins of earth!

Journal, v, 112.

May 5, 1860. There are some dense beds of houstonia in the yard of the old Conantum house. Some parts of them show of a distinctly bluer shade two rods off. They are most interesting now, before many other flowers are out, the grass high, and they have lost their freshness. I sit down by one dense bed of them to examine it. It is about three feet long and two or more wide. The flowers not only crowd one another, but are in several tiers, one above another, and completely hide the ground, — a mass of white. Counting those in a small place, I find that there are about three thousand flowers in a square foot. They are all turned a little toward the sun, and emit a refreshing odor. Here is a lumbering humblebee, probing these tiny flowers. It is a rather ludicrous sight. Of course they will not support him, except a little

where they are densest; so he bends them down awkwardly (hauling them in with his arms, as it were), one after another, thrusting his beak into the tube of each. It takes him but a moment to dispatch one. It is a singular sight, a humblebee clambering over a bed of these delicate flowers.

Journal, XIII, 278.

MAYFLOWERS (*EPIGÆA REPENS*)

APRIL 4, 1859. The epigæa looks as if it would open in two or three days at least, — showing much color. The flower-buds are protected by the withered leaves, oak leaves, which partly cover them, so that you must look pretty sharp to detect the first flower. These plants blossom by main strength, as it were, or the virtue that is in them, — not growing by water, as most early flowers, — in dry copses.

Journal, XII, 114.

APRIL 29, 1852. The mayflower on the point of blossoming. I think I may say that it will blossom to-morrow. The blossoms of this plant are remarkably concealed beneath the leaves, perhaps for protection. It is singularly unpretending, not seeking to exhibit or display its simple beauty. It is the most delicate flower, both to eye and to scent, as yet. Its weather-worn leaves do not adorn it. If it had fresh spring leaves it would be more famous and sought after.

Journal, III, 480.

WOOD ANEMONES

APRIL 28, 1856. Many *Anemone nemorosa* in full bloom at the further end of Yellow Thistle Meadow, in that warm nook by the brook, some probably a day or two there. I think that they are thus early

on account of Miles's dam having broken away and washed off all the snow for some distance there, in the latter part of the winter, long before it melted elsewhere. It is a warm corner under the south side of a wooded hill, where they are not often, if ever before, flooded.

Journal, VIII, 315.

MAY 2, 1855. The anemone is well named, for see now the *nemorosa*, amid the fallen brush and leaves, trembling in the wind, so fragile.

Journal, VII, 352.

MAY 9, 1852. To Trillium Woods. These low woods are full of the *Anemone nemorosa*, half opened at this hour and gracefully drooping, — sepals with a purple tinge on the under side, now exposed. They are in beds and look like hail on the ground; their now globular flowers spot the ground white.

Journal, IV, 40.

RABBITS AND PARTRIDGES

WHAT is a country without rabbits and partridges? They are among the most simple and indigenous animal products; ancient and venerable families known to antiquity as to modern times; of the very hue and substance of Nature, nearest allied to leaves and to the ground, — and to one another; it is either winged or it is legged. It is hardly as if you had seen a wild creature when a rabbit or a partridge bursts away, only a natural one, as much to be expected as rustling leaves. The partridge and the rabbit are still sure to thrive, like true natives of the soil, whatever revolutions occur. If the forest is cut off, the sprouts and bushes which spring up afford them concealment, and they become more numerous than ever. That must be a poor country indeed that does not support a hare. Our woods teem with them both, and around every swamp may be seen the partridge or rabbit walk, beset with twiggy fences and horse-hair snares, which some cow-boy tends.

Walden, 310.

A PARTRIDGE NEST

MAY 7, 1855. A partridge flew up from within three or four feet of me with a loud whir, and betrayed one cream-colored egg in a little hollow amid the leaves.

MAY 12. I find the partridge-nest of the 7th partially covered with dry oak leaves, and two more eggs only, three in all, cold. Probably the bird is killed.

MAY 26. The partridge which on the 12th had left three cold eggs covered up with oak leaves is now sitting on eight. She apparently deserted her nest for a time and covered it.[1]

Journal, VII, 363, 371, 390.

[1] These entries illustrate a habit of Thoreau's — examples of which abound in the journal — of following up an interesting subject so as to make a complete record. Bradford Torrey remarks that Thoreau's pronunciation of the family name, which was very much like the adjective "thorough," suggests a conspicuous trait in his character. H. W. G.

BIRD-FOOT VIOLETS (*VIOLA PEDATA*)

MAY 10, 1858. How much expression there is in the *Viola pedata!* I do not know on the whole but it is the handsomest of them all, it is so large and grows in such large masses. I have thought there was a certain shallowness in its expression, yet it spreads so perfectly open with its face turned upward that you get its whole expression.

Journal, x, 411.

MAY 17, 1853. The *V. pedata* presents the greatest array of blue of any flower as yet. The flowers are so raised above their leaves, and so close together, that they make a more indelible impression of blue on the eye; it is almost dazzling. I blink as I look at them, they seem to reflect the blue rays so forcibly, with a slight tinge of lilac.

Journal, v, 165.

FRINGED POLYGALA

MAY 17, 1853. The fringed polygala surprises us in meadows or in low woods as a rarer, richer, and more delicate color, with a singularly tender or delicate-looking leaf. As you approach midsummer, the color of flowers is more intense and fiery. The reddest flower is the flower especially. Our blood is not white, nor is it yellow, nor even blue.

Journal, v, 164.

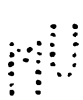
MAY 27, 1852. The fringed polygala near the Corner Spring is a delicate flower, with very fresh tender green leaves and red-purple blossoms; beautiful from the contrast of its clear red-purple flowers with its clear green leaves.

Journal, IV, 74.

MAY FOLIAGE

MAY 17, 1852. Now the sun has come out after the May storm, how bright, how full of freshness and tender promise and fragrance is the new world! The woods putting forth new leaves; it is a memorable season. So hopeful! These young leaves have the beauty of flowers. . . . Do I smell the young birch leaves at a distance? Most trees are beautiful when leafing out, but especially the birch. After a storm at this season, the sun comes out and lights up the tender expanding leaves, and all nature is full of light and fragrance, and the birds sing without ceasing, and the earth is a fairyland. The birch leaves are so small that you see the landscape through the tree, and they are like silvery and green spangles in the sun, fluttering about the tree.

Journal, IV, 61, 62.



MAY 22, 1854. Now the springing foliage is like a sunlight on the woods. I was first attracted and surprised when I looked round and off to Conantum, at the smooth, lawn-like green fields and pasturing cows, bucolical, reminding me of new butter. The air so clear — as not in summer — makes all things shine, as if all surfaces had been washed by the rains of spring and were not yet soiled or begrimed or dulled. You see even to the mountains clearly. The grass so short and fresh, the tender yellowish-green and silvery foliage of the deciduous trees lighting up the landscape, the birds now most musical, the sorrel beginning to redden the fields with ruddy health, — all these things make earth now a paradise. How many times I have been surprised thus, on turning about on this very spot, at the fairness of the earth!

Journal, VI, 289.

BARN SWALLOW

MAY 20, 1852. A barn swallow accompanied me across the Depot Field, methinks attracted by the insects which I started, though I saw them not, wheeling and tacking incessantly on all sides and repeatedly dashing within a rod of me. It is an agreeable sight to watch one. Nothing lives in the air but is in rapid motion.

Journal, IV, 66.

VESPER SPARROW (BAY-WING)

MAY 12, 1857. While dropping beans in the garden at Texas just after sundown, I hear from across the fields the note of the bay-wing, and it instantly translates me from the sphere of my work and repairs all the world that we jointly inhabit. It reminds me of so many country afternoons and evenings when this bird's strain was heard far over the fields. The spirit of its earth-song, of its serene and true philosophy, was breathed into me, and I saw the world as through a glass, as it lies eternally. Some of its aboriginal contentment, even of its domestic felicity, possessed me. What he suggests is permanently true. As the bay-wing sang many a thousand years ago, so sang he to-night. In the beginning God heard his song and pronounced it good, and hence it has endured. . . . I ordinarily plod along a sort of white-

washed prison entry, subject to some indifferent or even grovelling mood. I do not distinctly realize my destiny. I have turned down my light to the merest glimmer and am doing some task which I have set myself. I take incredibly narrow views, live on the limits, and have no recollection of absolute truth. Mushroom institutions hedge me in. But suddenly, in some fortunate moment, the voice of eternal wisdom reaches me even, in the strain of the sparrow, and liberates me, whets and clarifies my senses, makes me a competent witness.

Journal, IX, 363–65.

APPLE BLOSSOMS

MAY 21, 1852. The earlier apple trees are in bloom, and resound with the hum of bees of all sizes and other insects. To sit under the first apple tree in blossom is to take another step into summer. The apple blossoms are so abundant and full, white tinged with red; a rich-scented Pomona fragrance, telling of heaps of apples in the autumn, perfectly innocent, wholesome, and delicious.

Journal, IV, 67.

The flowers of the apple are perhaps the most beautiful of any tree's, so copious and so delicious to both sight and scent. The walker is frequently tempted to turn and linger near some more than usually handsome one, whose blossoms are two-thirds expanded. How superior it is in these respects to the pear, whose blossoms are neither colored nor fragrant!

Excursions, 294.

BEAUTY OF WILD APPLES[1]

APPLES, these I mean, unspeakably fair, — apples not of Discord, but of Concord! Yet not so rare but

[1] Thoreau's enthusiastic essay on "Wild Apples" is still admirably up-to-date, so far as Concord is concerned. Both when in flower and in fruit, the wild apple trees of Concord form a strong attraction for the walker. H. W. G.

that the homeliest may have a share. Painted by the frosts, some a uniform clear bright yellow, or red, or crimson, as if their spheres had regularly revolved, and enjoyed the sun on all sides alike, — some with the faintest pink blush imaginable, — some brindled with deep red streaks like a cow, or with hundreds of fine blood-red rays running regularly from the stem-dimple to the blossom end, like meridional lines, on a straw-colored ground, — some touched with a greenish rust, like a fine lichen, here and there, with crimson blotches or eyes more or less confluent and fiery when wet, — and others gnarly, and freckled or peppered all over on the stem side with fine crimson spots on a white ground, as if accidentally sprinkled from the brush of Him who paints the autumn leaves. Others, again, are sometimes red inside, perfused with a beautiful blush, fairy food, too beautiful to eat, — apple of the Hesperides, apple of the evening sky!

Excursions, 314, 315.

LORING'S POND

MAY 17, 1852. To Loring's Pond. The different color of the water at different times would be worth observing. To-day it is full of light and life, the breeze presenting many surfaces to the sun. There is a sparkling shimmer on it. It is a deep, dark blue, as the sky is clear. The air everywhere is, as it were, full of the rippling of waves. This pond is the more interesting for the islands in it. The water is seen running behind them, and it is pleasant to know that it penetrates quite behind and isolates the land you see, or to see it apparently flowing out from behind an island with shining ripples.

Journal, IV, 60.

A LILAC BUSH — THE LAST REMNANT OF A HOME[1]

STILL grows the vivacious lilac a generation after the door and lintel and the sill are gone, unfolding its sweet-scented flowers each spring, to be plucked by the musing traveller; planted and tended once by children's hands, in front-yard plots, — now standing by wallsides in retired pastures, and giving

[1] Thoreau's reference in this description is to the lilac bushes (some of which still exist) marking the former residences on Brister's Hill of some colored families. The bush in the photograph is more interesting as being the sole relic of the old homestead on Conantum to which Thoreau refers several times. (See *Journal*, vol. x, p. 364.) H. W. G.

place to new-rising forests; — the last of that stirp, sole survivor of that family. Little did the dusky children think that the puny slip with its two eyes only, which they stuck in the ground in the shadow of the house and daily watered, would root itself so, and outlive them, and house itself in the rear that shaded it, and grown man's garden and orchard, and tell their story faintly to the lone wanderer a half-century after they had grown up and died, — blossoming as fair, and smelling as sweet, as in that first spring. I mark its still tender, civil, cheerful, lilac colors.

Walden, 290.

RHODORA

MAY 17, 1853. The rhodora is peculiar for being, like the peach, a profusion of pink blossoms on a leafless stem.

MAY 23. I see the light purple of the rhodora enlivening the edges of swamps — another color the sun wears. It is a beautiful shrub seen afar, and makes a great show from the abundance of its bloom unconcealed by leaves, rising above the andromeda. Is it not the most showy high-colored flower or shrub? Flowers are the different colors of the sunlight.

Journal, v, 163, 185.

MAY 17, 1854. The splendid rhodora now sets the swamps on fire with its masses of rich color. It is one of the first flowers to catch the eye at a distance in masses, — so naked, unconcealed by its own leaves.

Journal, VI, 277.

WILD PINK

MAY 30, 1854. The pink is certainly one of the finest of our flowers and deserves the place it holds in my memory. It is now in its prime on the south side of the Heywood Peak, where it grows luxuriantly in dense rounded tufts or hemispheres, raying out on every side and presenting an even and regular sur-

face of expanded flowers. It is associated in my mind with the first heats of summer, or those which announce its near approach.

Journal, VI, 317, 318.

JUNE 1, 1853. The tufts of pinks on the side of the peak by the pond grow raying out somewhat from a centre, somewhat like a cyme, on the warm dry side-hill, — some a lighter, some a richer and darker, shade of pink. With what a variety of colors we are entertained! Yet most colors are rare or in small doses, presented us as a condiment or spice. Much of green, blue, black, and white, but of yellow and the different shades of red far less. The eye feasts on the colors of flowers as on titbits; they are its spices.

Journal, V, 212.

FERNS IN THE WOODS

MAY 26, 1853. Now is the time to walk in low, damp maple copses and see the tender, luxuriant foliage that has pushed up, mushroom-like, before the sun has come to harden it — the ferns of various species and in various stages, some now in their most perfect and beautiful condition, completely unfolded, tender and delicate, but perfect in all their details, far more than any lace-work — the most elaborate leaf we have. So flat, just from the laundry, as if pressed by some invisible flat-iron in the air. Unfolding with such mathematical precision in the free air, — green, starched and pressed, —might they not be transferred, patterns for Mechlin and Brussels?

Journal, v, 190.

FLOWERING DOGWOOD (*CORNUS FLORIDA*)

MAY 27, 1853. The *Cornus florida* now fairly out, and the involucres are now not greenish-white but white tipped with reddish — like a small flock of white birds passing, — three and a half inches in diameter, the larger ones, as I find by measuring. It is something quite novel in the tree line.

Journal, v, 192.

MAY 24, 1858. To New York by railroad. All through Connecticut and New York the white invo-

lucres of the cornel (*C. florida*), recently expanded, some of them reddish or rosaceous, are now conspicuous. It is not quite expanded in Concord. It is the most showy indigenous tree now open.

Journal, x, 442.

II. SUMMER

PINCUSHION GALLS

JUNE 1, 1853. The pincushion galls on young white oaks are now among the most beautiful objects in the woods, coarse woolly white to appearance, spotted with bright red or crimson on the exposed side. It is remarkable that a mere gall, which at first we are inclined to regard as something abnormal, should be made so beautiful, as if it were the *flower* of the tree; that a disease, an excrescence, should prove, perchance, the greatest beauty, — as the tear of the pearl.

Journal, v, 210.

A NIGHTHAWK'S NEST

JUNE 1, 1853. Walking up this side-hill, I disturbed a nighthawk eight or ten feet from me, which went, half fluttering, half hopping, the mottled creature, down the hill as far as I could see. Without moving, I looked about and saw its two eggs on the bare ground, on a slight shelf of the hill, without any cavity or nest whatever, very obvious when once you had detected them, but not easily detected from their color, — a coarse gray formed of white spotted with a bluish or slaty brown or umber, a stone — granite — color, like the places it selects. I advanced and put my hand on them, and while I stooped, seeing a shadow on the ground, looked up and saw the bird,

which had fluttered down the hill so blind and helpless, circling low and swiftly past over my head, showing the white spot on each wing in true nighthawk fashion. When I had gone a dozen rods, it appeared again higher in the air, with its peculiar flitting, limping kind of flight, all the while noiseless, and, suddenly descending, it dashed at me within ten feet of my head, like an imp of darkness, then swept away high over the pond, dashing now to this side now to that, on different tacks, as if, in pursuit of its prey, it had already forgotten its eggs on the earth. I can see how it might easily come to be regarded with superstitious awe.

Journal, v, 214, 215.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS AND NEST

JUNE 1, 1857. A red-wing's nest, four eggs, low in a tuft of sedge in an open meadow. What Champollion can translate the hieroglyphics on these eggs? It is always writing of the same character, though much diversified. While the bird picks up the material and lays the egg, who determines the style of the marking? When you approach, away dashes the dark mother, betraying her nest, and then chatters her anxiety from a neighboring bush, where she is soon joined by the red-shouldered male, who comes scolding over your head, chattering and uttering a sharp *phe-phee-e*.

Journal, IX, 397.

JUNE 6, 1856. How well suited the lining of a bird's nest, not only for the comfort of the young, but to keep the eggs from breaking! Fine elastic grass stems or root-fibres, pine-needles, or hair, or the like. These tender and brittle things which you can hardly carry in cotton lie there without harm.

Journal, VIII, 368.

JULY 30, 1852. What a gem is a bird's egg, especially a blue or a green one, when you see one, broken or whole, in the woods! I noticed a small blue egg this afternoon washed up by Flint's Pond and half buried by white sand, and as it lay there, alternately

wet and dry, no color could be fairer, no gem could have a more advantageous or favorable setting. Probably it was shaken out of some nest which overhung the water. I frequently meet with broken egg-shells where a crow, perchance, or some thief has been marauding. And is not that shell something very precious that houses that winged life?

Journal, IV, 268, 269.

CLINTONIA

JUNE 2, 1853. *Clintonia borealis*, a day or two. This is perhaps the most interesting and neatest of what I may call the liliaceous plants we have. Its beauty at present consists chiefly in its commonly three very handsome, rich, clear dark-green leaves. They are perfect in form and color, broadly oblanceolate with a deep channel down the middle, uninjured by insects, arching over from a centre at the ground, sometimes very symmetrically disposed in a triangular fashion; and from their midst rises the scape a foot high, with one or more umbels of "green bell-shaped flowers," yellowish-green, nodding or bent downward, but without fragrance. In fact, the flower is all green, both leaves and corolla. The leaves alone — and many have no scape — would detain the walker. Its berries are its flower. A single plant is a great ornament in a vase, from the beauty of its form and the rich, unspotted green of its leaves.

Journal, v, 218, 219.

JUNE 13, 1852. The *Clintonia borealis* (Gray) is a handsome and perfect flower, though not high-colored. I prefer it to some more famous. But Gray should not name it from the Governor of New York. What is he to the lovers of flowers in Massachusetts? If named after a man, it must be a man of flowers. Rhode Island botanists may as well name the flowers after their governors as New York. Name your canals and railroads after Clinton, if you please, but his name is not associated with flowers.[1]

Journal, IV, 95.

[1] The Clintonia was so named by Rafinesque, in 1832, not by Dr. Gray, in honor of Governor De Witt Clinton, who was a naturalist of some note, although chiefly famous in connection with the building of the Erie Canal. H. W. G.

EARLY MORNING FOG FROM NAWSHAWTUCT HILL

JUNE 2, 1853. 4 A.M. To Nawshawtuct. I go to the river in a fog through which I cannot see more than a dozen rods, — three or four times as deep as the houses. . . . Now I have reached the hilltop above the fog at a quarter to five, about sunrise, and all around me is a sea of fog, level and white, reaching nearly to the top of this hill, only the tops of a few high hills appearing as distant islands in the main. It is just like the clouds beneath you as seen from a mountain. It is a perfect level in some directions, cutting the hills near their summits with a geometrical line, but puffed up here and there, and more and more toward the east, by the influence of the sun. It resembles nothing so much as the ocean. You can get here the impression which the ocean makes, without ever going to the shore. Men — poor simpletons as they are — will go to a panorama by families, to see a Pilgrim's Progress, perchance, who never yet made progress so far as to the top of such a hill as this at the dawn of a foggy morning. All the fog they know is in their brains. The seashore exhibits nothing more grand or on a larger scale. How grand where it rolls off northeastward over Ball's Hill like a glorious ocean after a storm, just lit by the rising sun! It is as boundless as the view from the highlands of Cape Cod. They are exaggerated billows,

the ocean on a larger scale, the sea after some tremendous and unheard-of storm, for the actual sea never appears so tossed up and universally white with foam and spray as this now far in the northeastern horizon, where mountain billows are breaking on some hidden reef or bank. It is tossed up toward the sun and by it into the most boisterous of seas, which no craft, no ocean steamer, is vast enough to sail on.

Journal, v, 216, 217.

BUTTERCUPS BY THE ROADSIDE

JUNE 4, 1860. The clear brightness of June was well represented yesterday by the buttercups along the roadside. Their yellow so glossy and varnished within, but not without. Surely there is no reason why the new butter should not be yellow now.

Journal, XIII, 328.

LUPINES [1]

JUNE 5, 1852. The lupine is now in its glory. It is the more important because it occurs in such extensive patches, even an acre or more together, and of such a pleasing variety of colors, — purple, pink, or lilac, and white, — especially with the sun on it, when the transparency of the flower makes its color changeable. It paints a whole hillside with its blue, making such a field (if not meadow) as Proserpine might have wandered in. Its leaf was made to be covered with dewdrops. I am quite excited by this prospect of blue flowers in clumps with narrow intervals. Such a profusion of the heavenly, the elysian, color, as if these were the Elysian Fields. They say the seeds look like babies' faces, and hence the flower is so named. No other flowers exhibit so much blue.

[1] For various reasons (chiefly increased pasturage) the lupines in Concord have largely disappeared. Repeated visits to the localities noted by Thoreau have failed to reveal more than an occasional straggling plant. H. W. G.

That is the value of the lupine. The earth is blued with them. Yet a third of a mile distant I do not detect their color on the hillside. Perchance because it is the color of the air. It is not *distinct* enough. You passed along here, perchance, a fortnight ago, and the hillside was comparatively barren, but now you come and these glorious redeemers appear to have flashed out here all at once. Who planted the seeds of lupines in the barren soil? Who watereth the lupines in the fields?

Journal, IV, 81, 82.

LADY'S-SLIPPERS

JUNE 5, 1856. Everywhere now in dry pitch pine woods stand the red lady's-slippers over the red pine leaves on the forest floor, rejoicing in June, with their two broad curving green leaves, — some even in swamps, — upholding their rich, striped, red, drooping sacks.

Journal, VIII, 365.

WILD CALLA LILY (*CALLA PALUSTRIS*)

JUNE 7, 1857. To river and Ponkawtasset with M. Pratt.

Pratt has got the *Calla palustris*, in prime, — some was withering, so it may have been out ten days, — from the bog near Bateman's Pond; also *Oxalis violacea*, which he says began about last Sunday.

Journal, IX, 409.

JUNE 9, 1857. To Violet Sorrel and Calla Swamp.[1] The calla is generally past prime and going to seed.

I had said to Pratt, "It will be worth the while to look for other rare plants in Calla Swamp, for I have observed that where one rare plant grows there

[1] This illustrates Thoreau's habit of giving names of his own choosing to certain localities in Concord, the particular names oftentimes being suggested by the discovery of some rare plant, as in this case. Minot Pratt was a devoted lover of plants and introduced a number of wild species not previously found in Concord. He was one of the few residents of Concord who appreciated Thoreau's outdoor studies. H. W. G.

will commonly be others." Carrying out this design, this afternoon, I had not taken three steps into the swamp barelegged before I found the *Naumbergia thyrsiflora* [tufted loosestrife] in sphagnum and water, which I had not seen growing before.

Journal, IX, 411.

JULY 2, 1857. To Gowing's Swamp. *Calla palustris* (with its convolute point like the cultivated) at the south end of Gowing's Swamp. Having found this in one place, I now find it in another. Many an object is not seen, though it falls within the range of our visual ray, because it does not come within the range of our intellectual eye, *i.e.*, we are not looking for it. So, in the largest sense, we find only the world we look for.

Journal, IX, 466.

GREAT FRINGED ORCHIS

JUNE 8, 1854. Find the great fringed orchis out apparently two or three days. Two are almost fully out, two or three only budded. A large spike of peculiarly delicate pale-purple flowers growing in the luxuriant and shady swamp amid hellebores, ferns, golden senecios, etc. It is remarkable that this, one of the fairest of all our flowers, should also be one of the rarest, — for the most part not seen at all. I think that no other but myself in Concord annually finds it. That so queenly a flower should annually bloom so rarely and in such withdrawn and secret places as to be rarely seen by man! The village belle never sees this more delicate belle of the swamp. How little relation between our life and its! Most of us never see it or hear of it. The seasons go by to us as if it were not. A beauty reared in the shade of a convent, who has never strayed beyond the convent bell.

Journal, VI, 337, 338.

JUNE 15, 1852. Here also, at Well Meadow Head, I see the fringed purple orchis, unexpectedly beautiful, though a pale lilac purple, — a large spike of purple flowers. Why does it grow there only, far in a swamp, remote from public view? It is somewhat fragrant, reminding me of the lady's-slipper. Is it not significant that some rare and delicate and beautiful flowers should be found only in unfrequented

wild swamps? There is the mould in which the orchis grows. Yet I am not sure but this is a fault in the flower. It is not quite perfect in all its parts. A beautiful flower must be simple, not spiked. It must have a fair stem and leaves. This stem is rather naked, and the leaves are for shade and moisture. It is fairest seen rising from amid brakes and hellebore, its lower part or rather naked stem concealed. Where the most beautiful wild-flowers grow, there man's spirit is fed, and poets grow. It cannot be high-colored, growing in the shade. Nature has taken no pains to exhibit it, and few that bloom are ever seen by mortal eyes. The most striking and handsome large wild-flower of the year thus far that I have seen.

Journal, IV, 103, 104.

WHITE POND

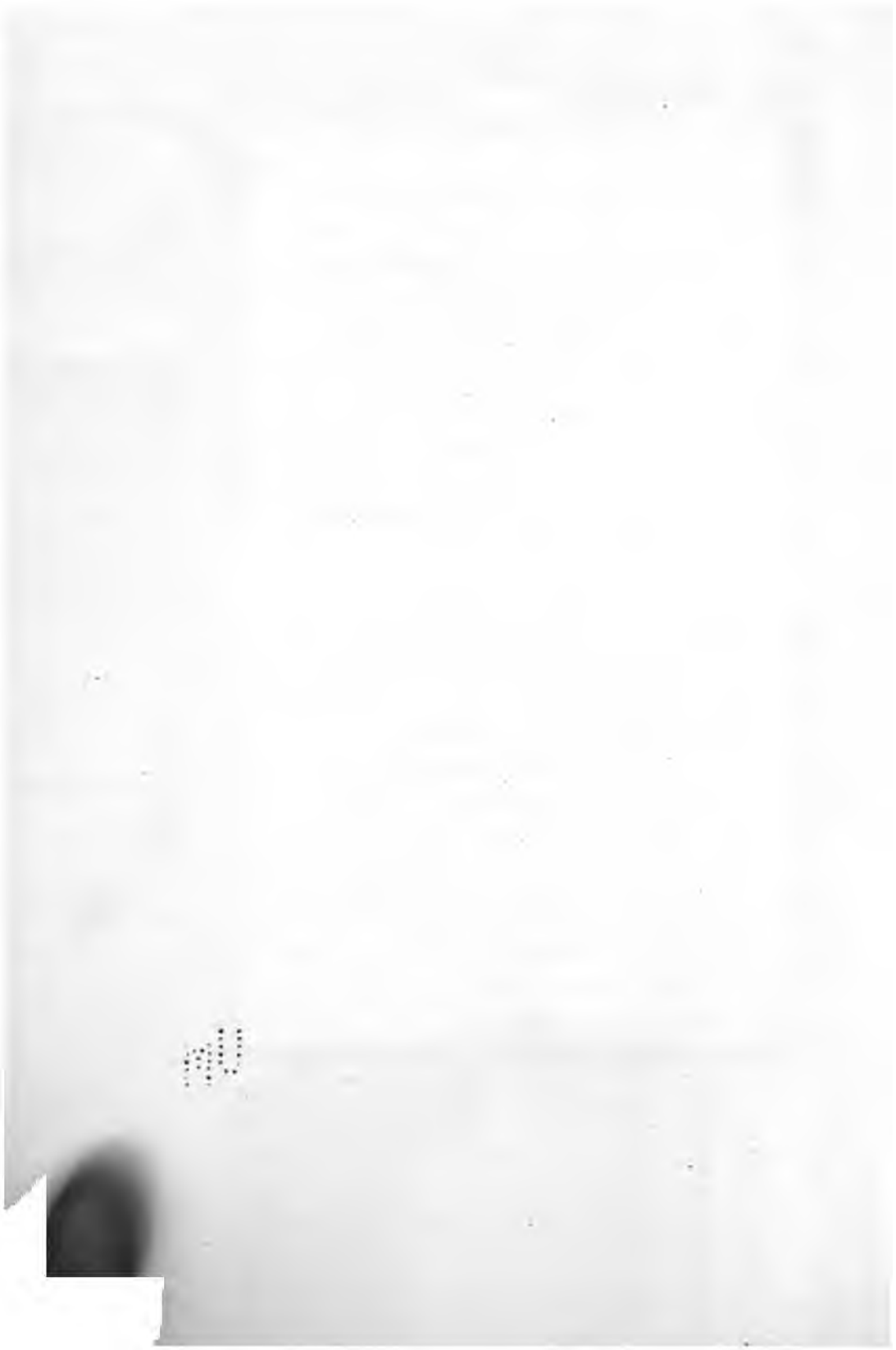
JUNE 14, 1853. To White Pond. How beautifully the northeast shore curves! The pines and other trees so perfect on their water side. There is no rawness nor imperfection to the edge of the wood in this case, as where an axe has cleared, or a cultivated field abuts on it; but the eye rises by natural gradations from the low shrubs, the alders, of the shore to the higher trees. It is a natural selvage. It is comparatively unaffected by man. The water laves the shore as it did a thousand years ago. Such curves in a wood bordering on a field do not affect us as when it is a winding shore of a lake. This is a firmer edge. It will not be so easily torn.

Journal, v, 251.

MOUNTAIN LAUREL

JUNE 23, 1852. The mountain laurel, with its milk-white flower, in cool and shady woods, reminds one of the vigor of nature. It is perhaps a first-rate flower, considering its size and evergreenness. Its flower-buds, curiously folded in a ten-angled pyramidal form, are remarkable. A profusion of flowers, with an innocent fragrance. It reminds me of shady mountainsides where it forms the underwood.

Journal, IV, 180.



JUNE 17, 1853. The mountain laurel by Walden in its prime. It is a splendid flower, and more red than that in Mason's pasture.[1] Its dry, dead-looking, brittle stems, as it were leaning over other bushes or each other, bearing at the ends great dense corymbs five inches in diameter of rose or pink tinged flowers, without an interstice between them, overlapping each other, each often more than an inch in diameter. A single one of which would be esteemed very beautiful. It is a highlander wandered down into the plain.

Journal, v, 269, 270.

[1] A single bush of mountain laurel is still to be found in Mason's pasture, but with the exception of where it has been planted for the adornment of private estates the mountain laurel in Concord (as Thoreau says in another place) is "as rare as poetry." H. W. G.

TREES REFLECTED IN THE RIVER

JUNE 15, 1840. I stood by the river to-day considering the forms of the elms reflected in the water. For every oak and birch, too, growing on the hill-top, as well as for elms and willows, there is a graceful ethereal tree making down from the roots, as it were the original idea of the tree, and sometimes Nature in high tides brings her mirror to its foot and makes it visible. Anxious Nature sometimes reflects from pools and puddles the objects which our grovelling senses may fail to see relieved against the sky with the pure ether for background.

It would be well if we saw ourselves as in perspective always, impressed with distinct outline on the sky, side by side with the shrubs on the river's brim. So let our life stand to heaven as some fair, sunlit tree against the western horizon, and by sunrise be planted on some eastern hill to glisten in the first rays of the dawn.

Journal, I, 139, 140.

Wherever the trees and skies are reflected, there is more than Atlantic depth, and no danger of fancy running aground. We notice that it required a separate intention of the eye, a more free and abstracted vision, to see the reflected trees and the sky, than to see the river bottom merely; and so there are manifold visions in the direction of every object, and even

the most opaque reflect the heavens from their surface. Some men have their eyes naturally intended to the one and some to the other object. Two men in a skiff, whom we passed hereabouts, floating buoyantly amid the reflections of the trees, like a feather in mid-air, or a leaf which is wafted gently from its twig to the water without turning over, seemed still in their element, and to have delicately availed themselves of the natural laws. Their floating there was a beautiful and successful experiment in natural philosophy, and it served to ennoble in our eyes the art of navigation; for as birds fly and fishes swim, so these men sailed. It reminded us how much fairer and nobler all the actions of man might be, and that our life in its whole economy might be as beautiful as the fairest works of art or nature.

Concord and Merrimack Rivers, 47, 48.

WILD ROSES

JUNE 15, 1853. Here are many wild roses northeast of Trillium Woods. We are liable to underrate this flower on account of its commonness. Is it not the queen of our flowers? How ample and high-colored its petals, glancing half concealed from its own green bowers! There is a certain noble and delicate civility about it, — not wildness. It is properly the type of the *Rosaceæ*, or flowers among others of most wholesome fruits. It is at home in the garden, as readily cultivated as apples. It is the pride of June. In summing up its attractions I should mention its rich color, size, and form, the rare beauty of its bud, its fine fragrance, and the beauty of the entire shrub, not to mention the almost innumerable varieties it runs into. I bring home the buds ready to expand, put them in a pitcher of water, and the next morning they open and fill my chamber with fragrance. This, found in the wilderness, must have reminded the Pilgrim of home.

Journal, v, 256.

JUNE 25, 1852. Methinks roses oftenest display their high colors, colors which invariably attract all eyes and betray them, against a dark ground, as the dark green or the shady recesses of the bushes and copses, where they show to best advantage. Their enemies do not spare the open flower for an hour. Hence, if for no other reason, their buds are most beautiful. Their promise of perfect and dazzling beauty, when their buds are just beginning to expand, — beauty which they can hardly contain, — as in most youths, commonly surpasses the fulfillment of their expanded flowers. The color shows fairest and brightest in the bud.

Journal, IV, 142.

WATER-LILIES

JUNE 19, 1853. Exquisitely beautiful, and unlike anything else that we have, is the first white lily just expanded in some shallow lagoon where the water is leaving it, — perfectly fresh and pure, before the insects have discovered it. How admirable its purity! how innocently sweet its fragrance! How significant that the rich, black mud of our dead stream produces the water-lily, — out of that fertile slime springs this spotless purity!

Journal, v, 283.

JUNE 16, 1854. Again I scent the white water-lily, and a season I had waited for is arrived. How indispensable all these experiences to make up the summer! It is the emblem of purity, and its scent suggests it. Growing in stagnant and muddy water, it bursts up so pure and fair to the eye and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have plucked the first one that has opened for a mile at least. What confirmation of our hopes is in the fragrance of the water-lily! I shall not so soon despair of the world

for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of the North.[1] It suggests that the time may come when men's deeds will smell as sweet. Such, then, is the odor our planet emits. Who can doubt, then, that Nature is young and sound? If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still full of vigor, and that there is virtue in man, too, who perceives and loves it. It is as if all the pure and sweet and virtuous was extracted from the slime and decay of earth and presented thus in a flower. The resurrection of virtue! . . . The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man; the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which springs from its midst. It is these sights and sounds and fragrances put together that convince us of our immortality.

Journal, VI, 352, 353.

[1] An instance of Thoreau's intense feeling on the slavery question, which found extended expression in his famous addresses on John Brown. (See the volume *Cape Cod and Miscellanies*, pp. 409 and 441; also numerous entries in the *Journal*, vols. XII and XIII.) H. W. G.

ORIENTATION OF YOUNG PINE SHOOTS

JUNE 23, 1852. There are interesting groves of young soft white pines eighteen feet high, whose vigorous yellowish-green shoots of this season, from three to eighteen inches long, at the extremities of all the branches, contrast remarkably with the dark green of the old leaves. I observe that these shoots are bent, and, what is more remarkable, all one way, *i.e.*, to the east, almost at a right angle the topmost ones, and I am reminded of the observation in Henry's Adventures, that the Indians guided themselves in cloudy weather by this mark. All these shoots, excepting those low down on the east side, are bent toward the east. I am very much pleased with this observation, confirming that of the Indians. I was singularly impressed when I first observed that all the young pines in this pasture obeyed this law, without regard to the direction of the wind or the shelter of other trees. To make myself more sure of the direction, as it was not easy to determine it exactly, standing on one side, where so many shoots were bent in the air, I went behind the trees on the west till the bent shoot appeared as a straight line, and then, by observing my shadow and guessing at the time of day, I decided that their direction was due east. This gives me more satisfaction than any observation which I have made for a long time. This is true of the rapidly growing shoots. How long

will this phenomenon avail to guide the traveller? How soon do they become erect? A natural compass. How few civilized men probably have ever made this observation, so important to the savage! How much may there have been known to his woodcraft which has not been detected by science! At first I remarked the shoots of a distinct yellowish green, contrasting with the rest of the tree, then that they were not upright but bent more or less, and next that they were all inclined one way, as if bent by the wind, and finally that they were all bent east, without regard to the wind.[1]

Journal, IV, 136, 137.

[1] In his journal entry for the next day, describing a trip to White Pond, Thoreau frankly but sadly remarks: "I am disappointed to notice to-day that most of the pine-tops incline to the west, as if the wind had to do with it."

A JUNE LANDSCAPE FROM FAIR HAVEN HILL

JUNE 30, 1860. Generally speaking, the fields are not imbrowned yet, but the freshness of the year is preserved. Standing on the side of Fair Haven Hill the verdure generally appears at its height, the air clear, and the water sparkling (after the rain of yesterday), and it is a world of glossy leaves and grassy fields and meads.

Seen through this clear, sparkling, breezy air, the fields, woods, and meadows are very brilliant and fair. The leaves are now hard and glossy (the oldest), yet still comparatively fresh, and I do not see a single acre of grass that has been cut yet. The river meadows on each side the stream, looking toward the light, have an elysian beauty. A light-yellow plush or velvet, as if some gamboge had been rubbed into them. They are by far the most bright and sunny-looking spots, such is the color of the sedges which grow there, while the pastures and hillsides are dark-green and the grain-fields glaucous-green.

Journal, XIII, 380.

WHITE CLOVER

JUNE 29, 1851. There is a great deal of white clover this year. In many fields where there has been no clover seed sown for many years at least,

it is more abundant than the red, and the heads are nearly as large. Also pastures which are close cropped, and where I think there was little or no clover last year, are spotted white with a humbler growth. And everywhere, by roadsides, garden borders, etc., even where the sward is trodden hard, the small white heads on short stems are sprinkled everywhere. As this is the season for the swarming of bees, and this clover is very attractive to them, it is probably the more difficult to secure them; at any rate it is the more important to secure their services now that they can make honey so fast. It is an interesting inquiry why this year is so favorable to the growth of clover.

Journal, II, 271, 272.

TARBELL'S SPRING

JULY 5, 1852. How cheering it is to behold a full spring bursting forth directly from the earth, like this of Tarbell's, from clean gravel, copiously, in a thin sheet; for it descends at once, where you see no opening, cool from the caverns of the earth, and making a considerable stream. Such springs, in the sale of lands, are not valued for as much as they are worth. I lie almost flat, resting my hands on what offers, to drink at this water where it bubbles, at the very udders of Nature, for man is never weaned from her breast while this life lasts. How many times in a single walk does he stoop for a draught!

Journal, IV, 188.

JULY 12, 1857. I drink at every cooler spring in my walk these afternoons and love to eye the bottom there, with its pebbly caddis-cases, or its white worms, or perchance a luxurious frog cooling himself next my nose. Sometimes the farmer, foreseeing haying, has been prudent enough to sink a tub in one, which secures a clear deep space. . . . When a spring has been allowed to fill up, to be muddied by cattle, or, being exposed to the sun by cutting down the trees and bushes, to dry up, it affects me sadly, like an institution going to decay. Sometimes I see, on one side the tub, — the tub overhung with various wild plants and flowers, its edge almost completely

for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of the North.[1] It suggests that the time may come when men's deeds will smell as sweet. Such, then, is the odor our planet emits. Who can doubt, then, that Nature is young and sound? If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still full of vigor, and that there is virtue in man, too, who perceives and loves it. It is as if all the pure and sweet and virtuous was extracted from the slime and decay of earth and presented thus in a flower. The resurrection of virtue! . . . The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man; the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which springs from its midst. It is these sights and sounds and fragrances put together that convince us of our immortality.

Journal, VI, 352, 353.

[1] An instance of Thoreau's intense feeling on the slavery question, which found extended expression in his famous addresses on John Brown. (See the volume *Cape Cod and Miscellanies*, pp. 409 and 441; also numerous entries in the *Journal*, vols. XII and XIII.) H. W. G.

concealed even from the searching eye, — the white sand freshly cast up where the spring is bubbling in. Often I sit patiently by the spring I have cleaned out and deepened with my hands, and see the foul water rapidly dissipated like a curling vapor and giving place to the cool and clear. Sometimes I can look a yard or more into a crevice under a rock, toward the sources of a spring in a hillside, and see it come cool and copious with incessant murmuring down to the light. There are few more refreshing sights in hot weather.

Journal, IX, 477, 478.

A WAVING RYE-FIELD

JULY 8, 1851. Here are some rich rye-fields waving over all the land, their heads nodding in the evening breeze with an apparently alternating motion; *i.e.*, they do not all bend at once by ranks, but separately, and hence this agreeable alternation. How rich a sight this cereal fruit, now yellow for the cradle, — *flavus!* It is an impenetrable phalanx. I walk for half a mile beside these Macedonians, looking in vain for an opening. There is no Arnold Winkelried to gather these spear-heads upon his breast and make an opening for me. This is food for man. The earth labors not in vain; it is bearing its burden. The yellow, waving, rustling rye extends far up and over the hills on either side, a kind of pinafore to nature, leaving only a narrow and dark passage at the bottom of a deep ravine. How rankly it has grown! How it hastes to maturity! I discover that there is such a goddess as Ceres. These long grain-fields which you must respect, — must go round, — occupying the ground like an army. The small trees and shrubs seen dimly in its midst are overwhelmed by the grain as by an inundation. They are seen only as indistinct forms of bushes and green leaves mixed with the yellow stalks. There are certain crops which give me the idea of bounty, of the *Alma Natura*. They are the grains. Potatoes do not so fill the lap of earth. This rye excludes everything else and takes possession of the soil.

The farmer says, "Next year I will raise a crop of rye"; and he proceeds to clear away the brush, and either plows it, or, if it is too uneven or stony, burns and harrows it only, and scatters the seed with faith. And all winter the earth keeps his secret, — unless it did leak out somewhat in the fall, — and in the spring this early green on the hillsides betrays him. When I see this luxuriant crop spreading far and wide in spite of rock and bushes and unevenness of ground, I cannot help thinking that it must have been unexpected by the farmer himself, and regarded by him as a lucky accident for which to thank fortune.

Journal, II, 293, 294.

YELLOW AND RED LILIES

JULY 19, 1851. Heavily hangs the common yellow lily (*Lilium Canadense*) in the meadows.

Journal, II, 320.

JULY 7, 1852. When the yellow lily flowers in the meadows, and the red in dry lands and by wood-paths, then, methinks, the flowering season has reached its height. They surprise me as perhaps no more can. Now I am prepared for anything.

Journal, IV, 201.

JULY 9, 1852. The red lily, with its torrid color and sun-freckled spots, dispensing, too, with the outer garment of a calyx, its petals so open and wide apart that you can see through it in every direction, tells of hot weather. It is a handsome bell shape, so upright, and the *flower* prevails over every other part. It belongs not to spring.

Journal, IV, 206, 207.

JULY 11, 1852. The yellow lily is not open-petalled like the red, nor is its flower upright, but drooping. On the whole I am most attracted by the red. They both make freckles beautiful.

Journal, IV, 219.

Having reloaded, we paddled down the Penobscot, which, as the Indian remarked, and even I detected, remembering how it looked before, was uncommonly full. We soon after saw a splendid yellow lily (*Lilium Canadense*) by the shore, which I plucked. It was six feet high, and had twelve flowers, in two whorls, forming a pyramid, such as I have seen in Concord. We afterward saw many more thus tall along this stream, and also still more numerous on the East Branch, and, on the latter, one which I thought approached yet nearer to the *Lilium superbum*. The Indian asked what we called it, and said that the "loots" (roots) were good for soup, that is, to cook with meat, to thicken it, taking the place of flour. They get them in the fall. I dug some, and found a mass of bulbs pretty deep in the earth, two inches in diameter, looking, and even tasting, somewhat like raw green corn on the ear.

The Maine Woods, 209.

AN OLD UNFREQUENTED ROAD

JULY 21, 1851. Now I yearn for one of those old, meandering, dry, uninhabited roads, which lead away from towns, which lead us away from temptation, which conduct to the outside of earth, over its uppermost crust; where you may forget in what country you are travelling; where no farmer can complain that you are treading down his grass, no gentleman who has recently constructed a seat in the country that you are trespassing; . . . along which you may travel like a pilgrim, going nowhither; where travellers are not too often to be met; . . . where the walls and fences are not cared for; where your head is more in heaven than your feet are on earth; . . . where it makes no odds which way you face, whether you are going or coming, whether it is morning or evening, mid-noon or midnight; where earth is cheap enough by being public; where you can walk and think with least obstruction, there being nothing to measure progress by; where you can pace when your breast is full, and cherish your moodiness; where you are not in false relations with men, are not dining nor conversing with them; by which you may go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Journal, II, 322.

JULY 23, 1851. On such a road (the Corner) [1] I walk securely, seeing far and wide on both sides, as if I were flanked by light infantry on the hills, to rout the provincials, as the British marched into Concord, while my grenadier thoughts keep the main road. That is, my light-armed and wandering thoughts scour the neighboring fields, and so I know if the coast is clear. With what a breadth of van I advance! I am not bounded by the walls. I think more than the road full.

Journal, II, 339.

[1] Thoreau would hardly apostrophize the Corner road (*i.e.*, the road to Nine-Acre Corner) to-day, for it has been carefully graded and macadamized; the root fences, the little brook crossing the road, and other features so attractive to him have disappeared, and there are plenty of "No Trespassing" signs on either hand. Instead of walking securely, his "grenadier thoughts" would be chiefly occupied in the effort to avoid disaster from the frequently passing automobiles! H. W. G.

BLUEBERRIES AND HUCKLEBERRIES

JULY 24, 1853. The berries of the *Vaccinium vacillans* [low blueberry] are very abundant and large this year on Fair Haven, where I am now. Indeed, these and huckleberries and blackberries are very abundant in this part of the town. Nature does her best to feed man. The traveller need not go out of the road to get as many as he wants; every bush and vine teems with palatable fruit. Man for once stands in such relation to Nature as the animals that pluck and eat as they go. The fields and hills are a table constantly spread. Wines of all kinds and qualities, of noblest vintage, are bottled up in the skins of countless berries, for the taste of men and animals. To men they seem offered not so much for food as for sociality, that they may picnic with Nature, — diet drinks, cordials, wines. We pluck and eat in remembrance of Her. It is a sacrament, a communion. The not-forbidden fruits, which no serpent tempts us to taste. Slight and innocent savors, which relate us to Nature, make us her guests and entitle us to her regard and protection. It is a Saturnalia, and we quaff her wines at every turn. This season of berrying is so far respected that the children have a vacation to pick berries, and women and children who never visit distant hills and fields and swamps on any other errand are seen making haste thither now, with half their domestic utensils in their hands. The

woodchopper goes into the swamp for fuel in the winter; his wife and children for berries in the summer.

Journal, v, 330, 331.

JULY 6, 1852. The early blueberries ripen first on the hills, before those who confine themselves to the lowlands are aware of it. When the old folks find only one turned here and there, children, who are best acquainted with the locality of berries, bring pailfuls to sell at their doors. For birds' nests and berries, give me a child's eyes. But berries must be eaten on the hills, and then how far from the surfeiting luxury of an alderman's dinner!

Journal, IV, 196.

YEW BERRY

AUGUST 10, 1858. Am surprised to find the yew with ripe fruit, where I had not detected fertile flowers. It fruits very sparingly, the berries growing singly here and there, on last year's wood, and hence four to six inches below the extremities of the upturned twigs. It is the most surprising berry that we have: first, since it is borne by an evergreen, hemlock-like bush with which we do not associate a soft and bright-colored berry, and hence its deep scarlet contrasts the more strangely with the pure, dark evergreen needles; and secondly, because of its form, so like art, and which could be easily imitated in wax, a very thick scarlet cup or mortar with a dark-purple bead set at the bottom. My neighbors are not prepared to believe that such a berry grows in Concord.

Journal, XI, 90, 91.

RATTLESNAKE-PLANTAIN

AUGUST 19, 1851. By the Marlborough road I notice the richly veined leaves of the *Neottia pubescens*, or veined neottia, rattlesnake-plantain. I like this last name very well, though it might not be easy to convince a quibbler or proser of its fitness. We want some name to express the mystic wildness of its rich leaves. Such work as men imitate in their embroidery, unaccountably agreeable to the eye, as if it

answered its end only when it met the eye of man; a reticulated leaf, visible only on one side; little things which make one pause in the woods, take captive the eye.

Journal, II, 407.

AUGUST 27, 1856. These oval leaves [of the rattlesnake-plantain], perfectly smooth like velvet to the touch, about one inch long, have a broad white midrib and four to six longitudinal white veins, very prettily and thickly connected by other conspicuous white veins transversely and irregularly, all on a dark rich green ground. Is it not the prettiest leaf that paves the forest floor?

Journal, IX, 28.

ROSE MALLOW (MARSH HIBISCUS)

AUGUST 16, 1852. *Hibiscus Moscheutos* (?), marsh hibiscus, apparently, N. Barrett's. Perchance has been out a week. I think it must be the most conspicuous and showy and at the same time *rich*-colored flower of this month. It is not so conspicuous as the sunflower, but of a rarer color, — "pale rose-purple," they call it, — like a hollyhock. It is surprising for its amount of color, and, seen unexpectedly amid the willows and button-bushes, with the mikania twining around its stem, you can hardly believe it is a flower, so large and tender it looks, like the greatest effort of the season to adorn the August days, and reminded me of that great tender moth, the *Attacus luna*, which I found on the water near where it grows. I think it must be allied to southern species. It suggests a more genial climate and luxuriant soil. It requires these vaporous dog-days.

Journal, IV, 297, 298

AUGUST 18, 1852. To Joe Clark's and Hibiscus Bank. . . . The hibiscus flowers are seen a quarter of a mile off over the water, like large roses, now that these high colors are rather rare. Some are exceedingly delicate and pale, almost white, just rose-tinted, others a brighter pink or rose-color, and all slightly plaited (the five large petals) and turned toward the sun, now in the west, trembling in the wind. So much color looks very rich in these localities. The flowers are some four inches in diameter, as large as water-lilies, rising amid and above the button-bushes and willows, with a large light-green tree-like leaf and a stem half an inch in diameter, apparently dying down to a perennial (?) root each year. A superb flower. Where it occurs it is certainly, next to the white lily, if not equally with it, the most splendid ornament of the river. . . . As I made excursions on the river when the white lilies were in bloom, so now I should make a hibiscus excursion.

Journal, IV, 299, 301.

CINNAMON FERNS IN CLINTONIA SWAMP

AUGUST 23, 1858. I go through [Clintonia Swamp], wading through the luxuriant cinnamon fern, which has complete possession of the swamp floor. Its great fronds, curving this way and that, remind me of a tropical vegetation. They are as high as my head and about a foot wide; may stand higher than my head without being stretched out. They grow in tufts of a dozen, so close that their fronds interlace and form one green waving mass. There in the swamp cellar under the maples. A forest of maples rises from a forest of ferns. My clothes are covered with the pale-brown wool which I have rubbed off their stems.

Journal, XI, 118.

SEPTEMBER 24, 1859. Stedman Buttrick's handsome maple and pine swamp is full of cinnamon ferns. I stand on the elevated road, looking down into it. The trees are very tall and slender, without branches for a long distance. All the ground, which is perfectly level, is covered and concealed, as are the bases of the trees, with the tufts of cinnamon fern, now a pale brown. It is a very pretty sight, these northern trees springing out of a groundwork of

ferns. It is like pictures of the tropics, except that here the palms are the undergrowth. You could not have arranged a nosegay more tastefully. It is a rich groundwork, out of which the maples and pines spring.

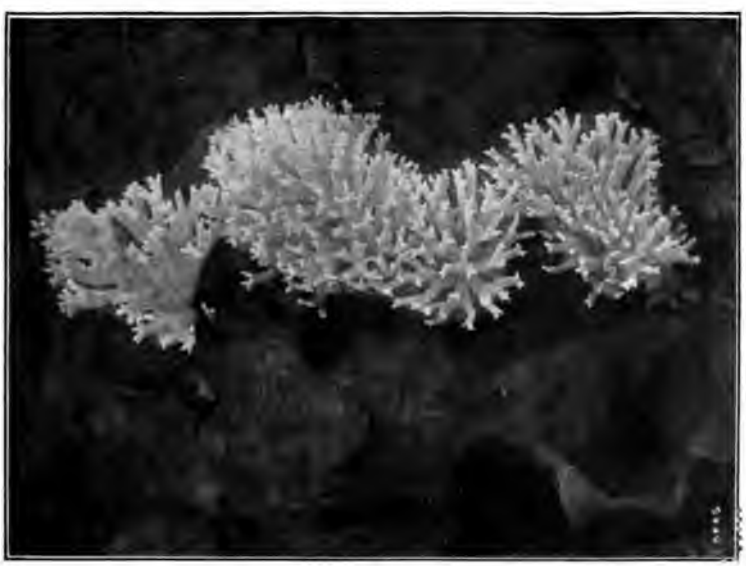
Journal, XII, 344.

III. AUTUMN

BEAUTIFUL FUNGI

SEPTEMBER 1, 1856. With R. W. E[merson] to Saw Mill [Brook]. We go admiring the pure and delicate tints of fungi on the surface of the damp swamp there, following up along the north side of the brook. There are many very beautiful lemon-yellow ones of various forms, some shaped like buttons, some becoming finely scalloped on the edge, some club-shaped and hollow, of the most delicate and rare but decided tints, contrasting well with the decaying leaves about them. There are others also pure white, others a wholesome red, others brown, and some even a light indigo-blue above and beneath and throughout. When colors come to be taught in the schools, as they should be, both the prism (or the rainbow) and these fungi should be used by way of illustration, and if the pupil does not learn colors, he may learn fungi, which perhaps is better. You almost envy the wood frogs and toads that hop amid such gems, — some pure and bright enough for a breastpin. Out of every crevice between the dead leaves oozes some vehicle of color, the unspent wealth of the year.

Journal, IX, 50, 51.



October 10, 1858. The simplest and most lumpish fungus has a peculiar interest to us, compared with a mere mass of earth, because it is so obviously organic and related to ourselves, however mute. It is the expression of an idea; growth according to a law; matter not dormant, not raw, but inspired, appropriated by spirit. If I take up a handful of earth, however separately interesting the particles may be, their relation to one another appears to be that of mere juxtaposition generally. I might have thrown them together thus. But the humblest fungus betrays a life akin to my own. It is a successful poem in its kind. There is suggested something superior to any particle of matter, in the idea or mind which uses and arranges the particles.

Journal, xi, 204.

LANE IN FRONT OF TARBELL'S

SEPTEMBER 4, 1851. The lane in front of Tarbell's house, which is but little worn and appears to lead nowhere, though it has so wide and all-engulfing an opening, suggested that such things might be contrived for effect in laying out grounds. (Only those things are sure to have the greatest and best effect, which like this were not contrived for the sake of effect.) An open path which would suggest walking and adventuring on it, the going to some place strange and far away. It would make you think of or imagine distant places and spaces greater than the estate.

It was pleasant, looking back just beyond, to see a heavy shadow (made by some high birches) reaching quite across the road. Light and shadow are sufficient contrast and furnish sufficient excitement when we are well.

Now we were passing the vale of Brown and Tarbell, a sunshiny mead pastured by cattle and sparkling with dew, the sound of crows and swallows heard in the air, and leafy-columned elms seen here and there shining with dew. The morning freshness and unworldliness of that domain! The vale of Tempe and of Arcady is not farther off than are the conscious lives of men from their opportunities. Our life is as far from corresponding to its scenery as we are distant from Tempe and Arcadia; that is to say,

they are far away because we are far from living natural lives. How absurd it would be to insist on the vale of Tempe in particular when we have such vales as we have!

Journal, II, 454.

SUNSET ON THE RIVER

SEPTEMBER 6, 1854. There are many clouds about and a beautiful sunset sky, a yellowish (dunnish?) golden sky, between them in the horizon, looking up the river. The beauty of the sunset is doubled by the reflection. Being on the water we have double the amount of lit and dun-colored sky above and beneath. The reflected sky is more dun and richer than the real one. Take a glorious sunset sky and double it, so that it shall extend downward beneath the horizon as much as above it, blotting out the earth, and let the lowest half be of the deepest tint, and every beauty more than before insisted on, and you seem withal to be floating directly into it. It was in harmony with this fair evening that we were not walking or riding with dust and noise through it, but moved by a paddle without a jar over the liquid and almost invisible surface, floating directly toward those islands of the blessed which we call clouds in the sunset sky.

Journal, VII, 19.

We never tire of the drama of sunset. I go forth each afternoon and look into the west a quarter of an hour before sunset, with fresh curiosity, to see what new picture will be painted there, what new panorama exhibited, what new dissolving views. Can Washington Street or Broadway show anything as good? Every day a new picture is painted and framed, held up for half an hour, in such lights as the Great Artist chooses, and then withdrawn and the curtain falls. And then the sun goes down, and long the afterglow gives light. And then the damask curtains glow along the western window. And now the first star is lit, and I go home.

Journal, III, 179.

GOLDENROD (*SOLIDAGO NEMORALIS*)

SEPTEMBER 12, 1859. To Moore's Swamp and Great Fields.

I stand in Moore's Swamp and look at Garfield's dry bank, now before the woods generally are changed at all. How ruddy ripe that dry hillside by the swamp, covered with goldenrods and clumps of hazel bushes here and there, now more or less scarlet. The goldenrods on the top and the slope of the hill are the *Solidago nemoralis*, at the base the taller *S. altissima*. The whole hillside is perfectly dry and ripe.

Many a dry field now, like that of Sted Buttrick's on the Great Fields, is one dense mass of the bright-golden recurved wands of the *Solidago nemoralis* (a little past prime), waving in the wind and turning upward to the light hundreds, if not a thousand, flowerets each. It is the greatest mass of conspicuous flowers in the year, and uniformly from one to two feet high, just rising above the withered grass all over the largest fields, now when pumpkins and other yellow fruits begin to gleam, now before the woods are noticeably changed. Such a mass of yellow for this field's last crop! Who that had botanized here in the previous month could have foretold this more profuse and teeming crop? All ringing, as do the low grounds, with the shrilling of crickets and locusts and frequented by honey-bees (*i.e.*, the gold-

enrod *nemoralis*). The whole field turns to yellow, as the cuticle of a ripe fruit. This is the season when the prevalence of the goldenrods gives such a ripe and teeming look to the dry fields and to the swamps. The *S. nemoralis* spreads its legions over the dry plains now, as soldiers muster in the fall. It is a muster of all its forces, which I review, eclipsing all other similar shows of the year. Fruit of August and September, sprung from the sun-dust. The fields and hills appear in their yellow uniform. There are certain fields so full of them that they might give their name to the town or region, as one place in England is called Saffron Walden. Perhaps the general prevalence of yellow is greater now when many individual plants are past prime.

Journal, XII, 320–22.

FALL ASTERS[1]

SEPTEMBER 14, 1856. Now for the *Aster Tradescanti* along low roads, like the Turnpike, swarming with butterflies and bees. Some of them are pink. How ever unexpected are these later flowers! You thought that Nature had about wound up her affairs. You had seen what she could do this year, and had not noticed a few weeds by the roadside, or mistook them for the remains of summer flowers now hastening to their fall; you thought you knew every twig and leaf by the roadside, and nothing more was to be looked for there; and now, to your surprise, these ditches are crowded with millions of little stars. They suddenly spring up and face you, with their legions on each side the way, as if they had lain in ambuscade there. The flowering of the ditches. Call them travellers' thoughts, numerous though small, worth a penny at least, which, sown in spring and summer, in the fall spring up unobserved at first, successively dusted and washed, mingled with nettles and beggar-ticks as a highway harvest. A starry meteoric shower, a milky way, in the flowery kingdom in whose aisles we travel. Let the traveller bethink himself, elevate and expand his thoughts somewhat, that his successors may oftener hereafter be cheered by the sight of an *Aster Novæ-Angliæ* or *spectabilis* here and there, to

[1] The photographs are of the *A. Tradescanti* and the *A. Novæ-Angliæ*.

remind him that a poet or philosopher has passed this way. The gardener with all his assiduity does not raise such a variety, nor so many successive crops on the same space, as Nature in the very road-side ditches. There they have stood, begrimed with dust and the wash of the road so long, and made acquaintance with passing sheep and cattle and swine, gathering a trivial experience, and now at last the fall rains have come to wash off some of that dust, and even they exhibit these dense flowery panicles as the result of all that experience, as pure for an hour as if they grew by some wild brook-side.

Journal, IX, 82, 83.

WITCH-HAZEL

THERE is something witchlike in the appearance of the witch-hazel, which blossoms late in October and in November, with its irregular and angular spray and petals like furies' hair, or small ribbon streamers. Its blossoming, too, at this irregular period, when other shrubs have lost their leaves, as well as blossoms, looks like witches' craft. Certainly it blooms in no garden of man's.

Concord and Merrimack Rivers, 379.

. . .

OCTOBER 9, 1851. To Conantum. The witch-hazel here is in full blossom on this magical hillside, while its broad yellow leaves are falling. It is an extremely interesting plant, — October and November's child, and yet reminds me of the very earliest spring. Its blossoms smell like the spring, like the willow catkins; by their color as well as fragrance they belong to the saffron dawn of the year, suggesting amid all these signs of autumn, falling leaves and frost, that the life of Nature, by which she eternally flourishes, is untouched. It stands here in the shadow on the side of the hill, while the sunlight from over the top of the hill lights up its topmost sprays and yellow blossoms. Its spray, so jointed and angular, is not to be mistaken for any other. I lie on my back with joy under its boughs. While its

leaves fall, its blossoms spring. The autumn, then, is indeed a spring. All the year is a spring. I see two blackbirds high overhead, going south, but I am going north in my thought with these hazel blossoms. It is a faery place. This is a part of the immortality of the soul.

Journal, III, 59, 60.

OCTOBER REFLECTIONS ON THE ASSABET

October 17, 1858. Up Assabet. Methinks the reflections are never purer and more distinct than now at the season of the fall of the leaf, just before the cool twilight has come, when the air has a finer grain. Just as our mental reflections are more distinct at this season of the year, when the evenings grow cool and lengthen and our winter evenings with their brighter fires may be said to begin.

One reason why I associate perfect reflections from still water with this and a later season may be that now, by the fall of the leaves, so much more light is let in to the water. The river reflects more light, therefore, in this twilight of the year, as it were an afterglow.

Journal, XI, 216, 217.

SUN-LIGHTED TUFTS OF ANDROPOGON

October 16, 1859. When we emerged from the pleasant footpath through the birches into Witherell Glade, looking along it toward the westering sun, the glittering white tufts of the *Andropogon scoparius*, lit up by the sun, were affectingly fair and cheering to behold, . . . their glowing half raised a foot or more above the ground, a lighter and more brilliant whiteness than the downiest cloud presents.

How cheerful these cold but bright white waving tufts! They reflect all the sun's light without a particle of his heat, or yellow rays. A thousand such tufts now catch up the sun and send to us his light but not heat. His heat is being steadily withdrawn from us. Light without heat is getting to be the prevailing phenomenon of the day now.

Journal, XII, 391, 392.

NOVEMBER 8, 1859. The tufts of purplish withered andropogon in Witherell Glade are still as fair as ever, soft and trembling and bending from the wind; of a very light mouse-color seen from the side of the sun, and as delicate as the most fragile ornaments of a lady's bonnet; but looking toward the sun they are a brilliant white, each polished hair (of the pappus?) reflecting the November sun without its heats, not in the least yellowish or brown like the goldenrods and asters.

Journal, XII, 442.

COBWEB DRAPERY IN BARRETT'S MILL

October 19, 1858. Ride to Sam Barrett's mill. Am pleased again to see the cobweb drapery of the mill.[1] Each fine lime hanging in festoons from the timbers overhead and on the sides, and on the discarded machinery lying about, is covered and greatly enlarged by a coating of meal, by which its curve is revealed, like the twigs under their ridges of snow in winter. It is like the tassels and tapestry of counterpane and dimity in a lady's bedchamber, and I pray that the cobwebs may not have been brushed away from the mills which I visit. It is as if I were aboard a man-of-war, and this were the fine "rigging" of the mill, the sails being taken in. All things in the mill wear the same livery or drapery, down to the miller's hat and coat. I knew Barrett forty rods off in the cranberry meadow by the meal on his hat.

Barrett's apprentice, it seems, makes trays of black birch and of red maple, in a dark room under the mill. I was pleased to see this work done here, a wooden tray is so handsome. You could count the circles of growth on the end of the tray, and the dark heart of the tree was seen at each end above, producing a semicircular ornament. It was a satisfaction to be reminded that we may so easily make

[1] When this photograph was taken, the miller, on being told the purpose of the photograph, remarked, "Oh, yes, those are the same cobwebs that Thoreau saw here fifty years ago!" H. W. G.

our own trenchers as well as fill them. To see the tree reappear on the table, instead of going to the fire or some equally coarse use, is some compensation for having it cut down.

Journal, XI, 224, 225.

FRINGED GENTIAN

October 19, 1852. At 5 P.M. I found the fringed gentian now somewhat stale and touched with frost, being in the meadow toward Peter's. Probably on high, moist ground it is fresher. It may have been in bloom a month. It has been cut off by the mower, and apparently has put out in consequence a mass of short branches full of flowers. This may make it later. I doubt if I can find one naturally grown. At this hour the blossoms are tightly rolled and twisted, and I see that the bees have gnawed round holes in their sides to come at the nectar. They have found them, though I had not. "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen" by man. An hour ago I doubted if fringed gentians were in Concord now, but, having found these, they as it were surrender, and I hear of them at the bottom of N. Barrett's orchard toward the river, and by Tuttle's (?). They are now, at 8 A.M., opening a little in a pitcher. It is too remarkable a flower not to be sought out and admired each year, however rare. It is one of the errands of the walker, as well as of the bees, for it yields him a more celestial nectar still. It is a very singular and agreeable surprise to come upon this conspicuous and handsome and withal blue flower at this season, when flowers have passed out of our minds and memories; the latest of all to begin to bloom, unless it be the witch-hazel, when, excepting the latter, flowers are reduced to that small Spartan

cohort, hardy, but for the most part unobserved, which linger till the snow buries them, and those interesting re-appearing flowers which, though fair and fresh and tender, hardly delude us with the prospect of a new spring, and which we pass by indifferent, as if they only bloomed to die. *Vide* Bryant's verses on the Fringed Gentian. It is remarkable how tightly the gentians roll and twist up at night, as if that were their constant state. Probably those bees were working late that found it necessary to perforate the flower.

Journal, IV, 390.

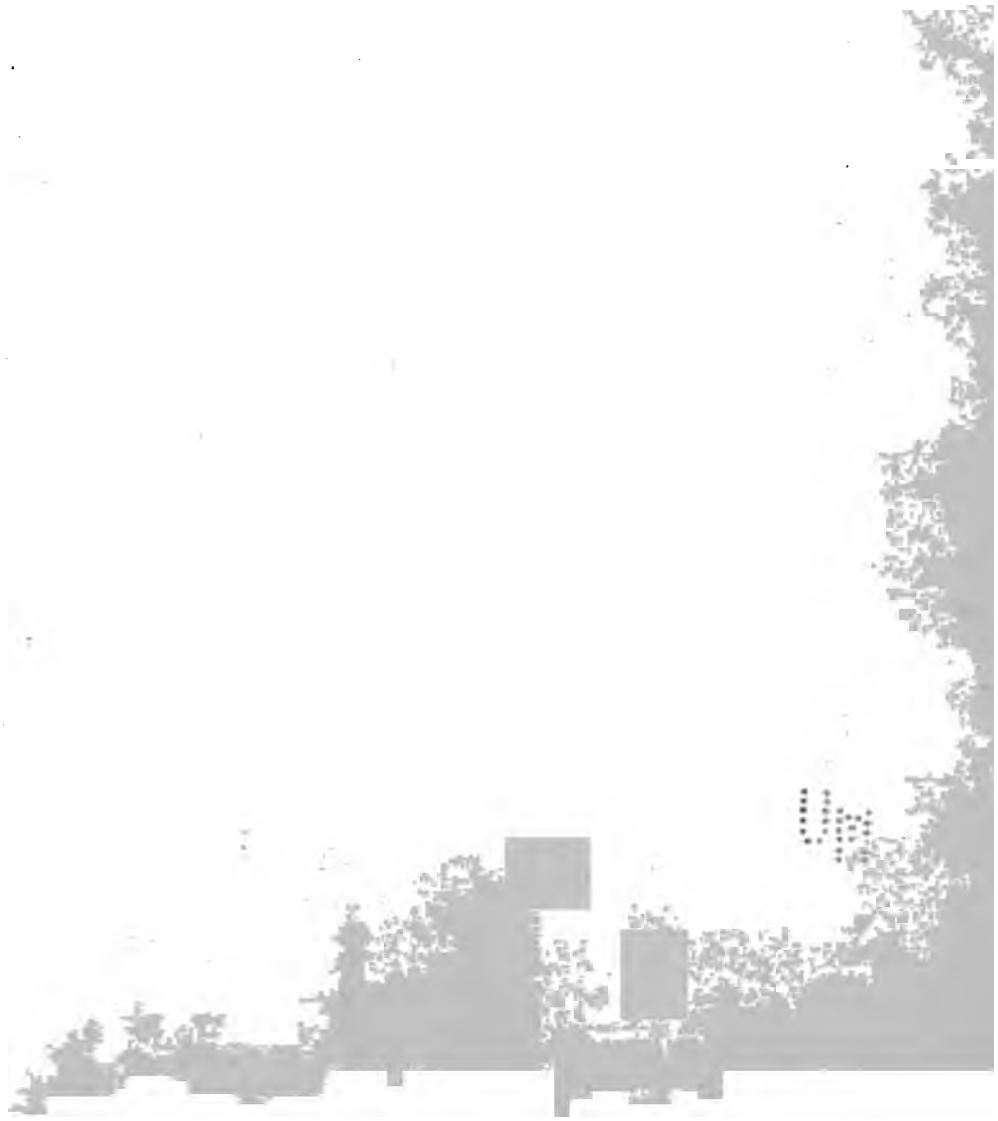
FALLEN LEAVES

For beautiful variety no crop can be compared with this. Here is not merely the plain yellow of the grains, but nearly all the colors that we know, the brightest blue not excepted: the early blushing maple, the poison sumach blazing its sins as scarlet, the mulberry ash, the rich chrome yellow of the poplars, the brilliant red huckleberry, with which the hills' backs are painted, like those of sheep. The frost touches them, and, with the slightest breath of returning day or jarring of earth's axle, see in what showers they come floating down! The ground is all parti-colored with them. But they still live in the soil, whose fertility and bulk they increase, and in the forests that spring from it. They stoop to rise, to mount higher in coming years, by subtle chemistry, climbing by the sap in the trees; and the sapling's first fruits thus shed, transmuted at last, may adorn its crown, when, in after years, it has become the monarch of the forest.

It is pleasant to walk over the beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling leaves. How beautifully they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and turn to mould! — painted of a thousand hues, and fit to make the beds of us living. So they troop to their last resting-place, light and frisky. They that soared so loftily, how contentedly they return to dust again, and are laid low, resigned to lie and decay

at the foot of the tree, and afford nourishment to new generations of their kind, as well as to flutter on high! They teach us how to die. One wonders if the time will ever come when men, with their boasted faith in immortality, will lie down as gracefully and as ripe.

Excursions, 269, 270.



LATE GREEN FERNS

OCTOBER 31, 1857. In the Lee farm swamp I see two kinds of ferns still green and much in fruit, apparently the *Aspidium spinulosum* and *cristatum*. They linger thus in all moist clammy swamps under the bare maples and grape-vines and witch-hazels, and about each trickling spring which is half choked with fallen leaves. What means this persistent vitality, invulnerable to frost and wet? Why were these spared when the brakes and osmundas were stricken down? . . . Even in them I feel an argument for immortality. Death is so far from being universal. To my eyes they are tall and noble as palm groves, and always some forest nobleness seems to have its haunt under their umbrage.

Journal, x, 149, 150.

POLYPODY

NOVEMBER 2, 1857. It is very pleasant and cheerful nowadays, when the brown and withered leaves strew the ground and almost every plant is fallen or withered, to come upon a patch of polypody on some rocky hillside in the woods, where, in the midst of the dry and rustling leaves, defying frost, it stands so freshly green and full of life. The mere greenness, which was not remarkable in the summer, is positively interesting now. My thoughts are with the

polypody a long time after my body has passed. The brakes, the sarsaparilla, the osmundas, the Solomon's-seals, the lady's-slippers, have long since withered and fallen. The huckleberries and blueberries, too, have lost their leaves. The forest floor is covered with a thick coat of moist brown leaves. But what is that perennial and springlike verdure that clothes the rocks, of small green plumes pointing various ways? It is the cheerful community of the polypody. It survives at least as the type of vegetation, to remind us of the spring which shall not fail. These are the green pastures where I browse now. Why is not this form copied by our sculptors instead of the foreign acanthus leaves and bays?

Journal, x, 153, 154.

NATURE'S DECORATION OF AN OLD STUMP

NOVEMBER 4, 1857. How swift Nature is to repair the damage that man does! When he has cut down a tree and left only a white-topped and bleeding stump, she comes at once to the rescue with her chemistry, and covers it decently with a fresh coat of gray, and in course of time she adds a thick coat of green cup and bright cockscomb lichens, and it becomes an object of new interest to the lover of nature! Suppose it were always to remain a raw stump instead! It becomes a shelf on which this humble vegetation spreads and displays itself, and we forget the death of the larger in the life of the less.

Journal, x, 160.

NOVEMBER 8, 1858. Nature has many scenes to exhibit, and constantly draws a curtain over this part or that. She is constantly repainting the landscape and all surfaces, dressing up some scene for our entertainment. Lately we had a leafy wilderness, now bare twigs begin to prevail, and soon she will surprise us with a mantle of snow. Some green she thinks so good for our eyes, like blue, that she never banishes it entirely, but has created evergreens.

Each phase of nature, while not invisible, is yet not too distinct and obtrusive. It is there to be found when we look for it, but not demanding our atten-

tion. It is like a silent but sympathizing companion in whose company we retain most of the advantages of solitude, with whom we can walk and talk, or be silent, naturally, without the necessity of talking in a strain foreign to the place.

I go across N. Barrett's land and over the road beyond his house. The aspect of the Great Meadows is now nearly uniform, the new and exposed grass being nearly as brown and sere as that which was not cut. Thus Nature has been blending and harmonizing the colors here where man had interfered.

Journal, XI, 296–98.

NOVEMBER WOODS

NOVEMBER 8, 1850. The stillness of the woods and fields is remarkable at this season of the year. There is not even the creak of a cricket to be heard. Of myriads of dry shrub oak leaves, not one rustles. Your own breath can rustle them, yet the breath of heaven does not suffice to. The trees have the aspect of waiting for winter. The autumnal leaves have lost their color; they are now truly sere, dead, and the woods wear a sombre color. Summer and harvest are over. The hickories, birches, chestnuts, no less than the maples, have lost their leaves. The sprouts, which had shot up so vigorously to repair the damage which the choppers had done, have stopped short for the winter. Everything stands silent and expectant. If I listen, I hear only the note of a chickadee, — our most common and I may say native bird, most identified with our forests, — or perchance the scream of a jay, or perchance from the solemn depths of these woods I hear tolling far away the knell of one departed. Thought rushes in to fill the vacuum. As you walk, however, the partridge still bursts away. The silent, dry, almost leafless, certainly fruitless woods. You wonder what cheer that bird can find in them. The partridge bursts away from the foot of a shrub oak like its own dry fruit, immortal bird! This sound still startles us. Dry goldenrods, now turned gray and white, lint

our clothes as we walk. And the drooping, downy seed-vessels of the epilobium remind us of the summer. Perchance you will meet with a few solitary asters in the dry fields, with a little color left. The sumach is stripped of everything but its cone of red berries.

Journal, II, 85.

FAIR HAVEN BAY THROUGH THE WOODS

NOVEMBER 6, 1853. Climbed the wooded hill by Holden's spruce swamp and got a novel view of the river and Fair Haven Bay through the almost leafless woods. How much handsomer a river or lake such as ours, seen thus through a foreground of scattered or else partially leafless trees, though at a considerable distance this side of it, especially if the water is open, without wooded shores or isles! It is the most perfect and beautiful of all frames, which yet the sketcher is commonly careful to brush aside. I mean a pretty thick foreground, a view of the distant water through the near forest, through a thousand little vistas, as we are rushing toward the former, — that intimate mingling of wood and water which excites an expectation which the near and open view rarely realizes. We prefer that some part be concealed, which our imagination may navigate.

Journal, v, 480.

NOVEMBER 21, 1850. I saw Fair Haven Pond with its island, and meadow between the island and the shore, and a strip of perfectly still and smooth water in the lee of the island, and two hawks, fish hawks perhaps, sailing over it. I did not see how it could be improved. Yet I do not see what these things can be. I begin to see such an object when I cease to *understand* it and see that I did not realize or appreciate it before, but I get no further than this. How adapted these forms and colors to my eye! A meadow and an island! What are these things? Yet the hawks and the ducks keep so aloof! and Nature is so reserved! I am made to love the pond and the meadow, as the wind is made to ripple the water.

Journal, II, 107.

SHRUB OAK LEAVES

NOVEMBER 29, 1857. Again I am struck by the singularly wholesome colors of the withered oak leaves, especially the shrub oak, so thick and firm and unworn, without speck or fret, clear reddish-brown (sometimes paler or yellowish brown), its whitish under sides contrasting with it in a very cheerful manner. So strong and cheerful, as if it rejoiced at the advent of winter, and exclaimed, "Winter, come on!" It exhibits the fashionable colors of the winter on the two sides of its leaves. It sets the fashions, colors good for bare ground or for snow, grateful to the eyes of rabbits and partridges. This is the extent of its gaudiness, red brown and misty white, and yet it is gay. The colors of the brightest flowers are not more agreeable to my eye.

Journal, x, 214.

DECEMBER 1, 1856. The dear wholesome color of shrub oak leaves, so clean and firm, not decaying, but which have put on a kind of immortality, not wrinkled and thin like the white oak leaves, but full-veined and plump, as nearer earth. Well-tanned leather on the one side, sun-tanned, color of colors, color of the cow and the deer, silver-downy beneath, turned toward the late bleached and russet fields. What are acanthus leaves and the rest to this? Emblem of my winter condition. I love and could em-

brace the shrub oak with its scanty garment of leaves rising above the snow, lowly whispering to me, akin to winter thoughts, and sunsets, and to all virtue. Covert which the hare and the partridge seek, and I too seek. Rigid as iron, clean as the atmosphere, hardy as virtue, innocent and sweet as a maiden is the shrub oak. In proportion as I know and love it, I am natural and sound as a partridge. I felt a positive yearning toward one bush this afternoon. There was a match found for me at last. I fell in love with a shrub oak.

Journal, IX, 145.

IV. WINTER

A WINTER SCENE FROM LEE'S CLIFF

DECEMBER 7, 1856. Take my first skate to Fair Haven Pond. . . . That grand old poem called Winter is round again without any connivance of mine. As I sit under Lee's Cliff, where the snow is melted, amid sere pennyroyal and frost-bitten catnep, I look over my shoulder upon an arctic scene. I see with surprise the pond a dumb white surface of ice speckled with snow, just as so many winters before, where so lately were lapsing waves or smooth reflecting water. I hear, too, the familiar belching voice of the pond. It seemed as if winter had come without any interval since midsummer, and I was prepared to see it flit away by the time I again looked over my shoulder. It was as if I had dreamed it. But I see that the farmers have had time to gather their harvests as usual, and the seasons have revolved as slowly as in the first autumn of my life. The winters come now as fast as snowflakes. It is wonderful that old men do not lose their reckoning. It was summer, and now again it is winter. Nature loves this rhyme so well that she never tires of repeating it. So sweet and wholesome is the winter, so simple and moderate, so satisfactory and perfect, that her children will never weary of it. What a poem! an epic in blank verse, enriched with a million tinkling rhymes. It is solid beauty. It has been subjected to the vicissitudes of millions of years of the

gods, and not a single superfluous ornament remains. The severest and coldest of the immortal critics have shot their arrows at it and pruned it till it cannot be amended.

Journal, IX, 165, 167, 168.

FROST CRYSTALS

DECEMBER 21, 1854. Walden is frozen over, apparently about two inches thick. It is very thickly covered with what C. calls ice-rosettes, *i.e.*, those small pinches of crystallized snow, — as thickly as if it had snowed in that form. I think it is a sort of hoar frost on the ice.

Journal, VII, 88.

JANUARY 1, 1856. On the ice at Walden are very beautiful great leaf crystals in great profusion. The ice is frequently thickly covered with them for many rods. They seem to be connected with the rosettes, — a running together of them. They look like a loose web of small white feathers springing from a tuft of down, as if a feather bed had been shaken over the ice. They are, on a close examination, surprisingly perfect leaves, like ferns, only very broad for their length and commonly more on one side the midrib than the other. They are so thin and fragile that they melt under your breath while looking closely at them.

Journal, VIII, 77.

DECEMBER 23, 1837. In the side of the high bank by the Leaning Hemlocks, there were some curious crystallizations. Wherever the water, or other causes, had formed a hole in the bank, its throat and outer edge, like the entrance to a citadel of the olden time, bristled with a glistening ice armor. In one place you might see minute ostrich feathers, which seemed the waving plumes of the warriors filing into the fortress, in another the glancing fan-shaped banners of the Lilliputian host, and in another the needle-shaped particles, collected into bundles resembling the plumes of the pine, might pass for a phalanx of spears. The whole hill was like an immense quartz rock, with minute crystals sparkling from innumerable crannies. I tried to fancy that there was a disposition in these crystallizations to take the forms of the contiguous foliage.

Journal, 1, 21, 22.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE SNOW

DECEMBER 25, 1851. A wind is now blowing the light snow into drifts, especially on the lee, now the south, side of the walls, the outlines of the drifts corresponding to the chinks in the walls and the eddies of the wind. The snow glides, unperceived for the most part, over the open fields until it reaches an opposite wall, which it sifts through and is blown over, blowing off from it like steam when seen in the sun. As it passes through the chinks, it does not drive straight onward, but curves gracefully upwards into fantastic shapes, somewhat like the waves which curve as they break upon the shore; that is, as if the snow that passes through a chink were one connected body, detained by the friction of its lower side. It takes the form of saddles and shells and porringers. It builds up a fantastic alabaster wall behind the first, — a snowy sierra. Astonishingly sharp and thin overhanging eaves it builds, even this dry snow, where it has the least suggestion from a wall or bank, — less than a mason ever springs his brick from. This is the architecture of the snow.

Journal, III, 154.

DECEMBER 25, 1856. A strong wind from the northwest is gathering the snow into picturesque drifts behind the walls. As usual they resemble shells more than anything, sometimes prows of vessels, also the folds of a white napkin or counterpane dropped over a bonneted head. There are no such picturesque snow-drifts as are formed behind loose and open stone walls.

Journal, IX, 197.

TRACKS IN THE SNOW

JANUARY 1, 1854. The snow is the great betrayer. We might expect to find in the snow the footprint of a life superior to our own, of which no zoölogy takes cognizance. Is there no trace of a nobler life than that of an otter or an escaped convict to be looked for in the snow? Shall we suppose that that is the only life that has been abroad in the night? It is only the savage that can see the track of no higher life than an otter. Why do the vast snow plains give us pleasure, the twilight of the bent and half-buried woods? Is not all there consonant with virtue, justice, purity, courage, magnanimity? Are we not cheered by the sight? And does not all this amount to the track of a higher life than the otter's, a life which has not gone by and left a footprint merely, but is there with its beauty, its music, its perfume, its sweetness, to exhilarate and recreate us? Where there is a perfect government of the world according to the highest laws, is there no trace of intelligence there, whether in the snow or the earth, or in ourselves? No other trail but such as a dog can smell? Is there none which an angel can detect and follow? None to guide a man on his pilgrimage, which water will not conceal? Is there no odor of sanctity to be perceived? Is its trail too old? Have mortals lost the scent? The great game for mighty hunters as soon as the first snow falls is Purity, for, earlier than any rabbit or fox, it is abroad,

and its trail may be detected by curs of lowest degree. Did this great snow come to reveal the track merely of some timorous hare, or of the Great Hare, whose track no hunter has seen? Is there no trace nor suggestion of Purity to be detected? If one could detect the meaning of the snow, would he not be on the trail of some higher life that has been abroad in the night? A life which, pursued, does not earth itself, does not burrow downward but upward, which takes not to the trees but to the heavens as its home, which the hunter pursues with winged thoughts and aspirations, — these the dogs that tree it, — rallying his pack with the bugle notes of undying faith, and returns with some worthier trophy than a fox's tail, a life which we seek, not to destroy it, but to save our own?

Journal, VI, 43, 44.

AFTER THE ICE STORM[1]

JANUARY 1, 1853. This morning we have something between ice and frost on the trees, etc. The whole earth, as last night, but much more, is encased in ice, which on the plowed fields makes a singular icy coat a quarter of an inch or more in thickness. This frozen drizzle, collected around the slightest cores, gives prominence to the least withered herbs and grasses. Where yesterday was a plain, smooth field, appears now a teeming crop of fat, *icy* herbage. The stems of the herbs on their north sides are enlarged from ten to a hundred times. What a crash of jewels as you walk! The most careless walker, who never deigned to look at these humble weeds before, cannot help observing them now. The drooping birches along the edges of woods are the most feathery, fairy-like ostrich plumes of the trees, and the color of their trunks increases the delusion. The weight of the ice gives to the pines the forms which northern trees, like the firs, constantly wear, bending and twisting the branches; for the twigs and plumes of the pines, being frozen, remain as the wind held them, and new portions of the trunk are exposed.

[1] An ice-storm such as Thoreau describes so intimately is by no means an annual occurrence in Concord. Indeed, in his entire journal Thoreau mentions only one other similar phenomenon. It required some years of "watchful waiting" before the opportunity arrived to secure photographs illustrating Thoreau's description. The single view herewith reproduced gives only a bare suggestion of the beauty of the outdoor world under such conditions. H. W. G.

Seen from the north, there is no greenness in the pines, and the character of the tree is changed. The willows along the edge of the river look like sedge in meadows. The sky is overcast, and a fine snowy hail and rain is falling, and these ghost-like trees make a scenery which reminds you of Spitzbergen. I see now the beauty of the causeway, by the bridge alders below swelling into the road, overtopped by willows and maples. The fine grasses and shrubs in the meadow rise to meet and mingle with the drooping willows, and the whole make an indistinct impression like a mist, and between this the road runs toward those white ice-clad ghostly or fairy trees in the distance, — toward spirit-land.

Journal, IV, 436–38.

HEAVY SNOW ON PITCH PINES

JANUARY 7, 1852. This afternoon, in dells of the wood and on the lee side of the woods, where the wind has not disturbed it, the snow still lies on the trees as richly as I ever saw it. It was just moist enough to stick. The pitch pines wear it best; their plumes hang down like the feathers of the ostrich or the tail of the cassowary, so purely white, — I am sorry that I cannot say *snowy* white, for in purity it is like nothing but itself. From contrast with the dark needles and stems of the trees, whiter than ever on the ground. The trees are bent under the weight into a great variety of postures, — arches, etc. Their branches and tops are so consolidated by the burden of snow, and they stand in such new attitudes, the tops often like canopies or parasols, agglomerated, that they remind me of the pictures of palms and other Oriental trees. Sometimes the lower limbs of the pitch pine, under such plumes and canopies, bear each their ridge of snow, crossing and interlacing each other like lattice-work, so that you cannot look more than a rod into the rich tracery.

Journal, III, 177.

JANUARY 30, 1841. The trees covered with snow admit a very plain and clean light, but not brilliant, as if through windows of ground glass; a sort of white darkness it is, all of the sun's splendor that can be retained.

You glance up these paths, closely imbowered by bent trees, as through the side aisles of a cathedral, and expect to hear a choir chanting from their depths. You are never so far in them as they are far before you. Their secret is where you are not and where your feet can never carry you.

The snow falls on no two trees alike, but the forms it assumes are as various as those of the twigs and leaves which receive it. They are, as it were, predetermined by the genius of the tree. So one divine spirit descends alike on all, but bears a peculiar fruit in each. The divinity subsides on all men, as the snowflakes settle on the fields and ledges and takes the form of the various clefts and surfaces on which it lodges.

Journal, I, 184, 185.

THE SWAMP IN WINTER

JANUARY 10, 1856. I love to wade and flounder through the swamp now, these bitter cold days when the snow lies deep on the ground, and I need travel but little way from the town to get to a Nova Zembla solitude, — to wade through the swamps, all snowed up, untracked by man, into which the fine dry snow is still drifting till it is even with the tops of the water andromeda and half-way up the high blueberry bushes. I penetrate to islets inaccessible in summer, my feet slumping to the sphagnum far out of sight beneath, where the alder-berry glows yet and the azalea buds, and perchance a single tree sparrow or a chickadee lisps by my side, where there are few tracks even of wild animals; perhaps only a mouse or two have burrowed up by the side of some twig, and hopped away in straight lines on the surface of the light, deep snow, as if too timid to delay, to another hole by the side of another bush; and a few rabbits have run in a path amid the blueberries and alders about the edge of the swamp. This is instead of a Polar Sea expedition and going after Franklin. There is but little life and but few objects, it is true. We are reduced to admire buds, even like the partridges, and bark, like the rabbits and mice, — the great yellow and red forward-looking buds of the azalea, the plump red ones of the blueberry, and the fine sharp red ones of the panicled andromeda,

sleeping along its stem, the speckled black alder, the rapid-growing dogwood, the pale-brown and cracked blueberry, etc. Even a little shining bud which lies sleeping behind its twig and dreaming of spring, perhaps half concealed by ice, is object enough. I feel myself upborne on the andromeda bushes beneath the snow, as on a springy basketwork, then down I go up to my middle in the deep but silent snow, which has no sympathy with my mishap. Beneath the level of this snow how many sweet berries will be hanging next August!

Journal, VIII, 99, 100.

A LODGING SNOW

JANUARY 20, 1855. In many instances the snow had lodged on trees yesterday in just such forms as a white napkin or counterpane dropped on them would take, — protuberant in the middle, with many folds and dimples. An ordinary leafless bush supported so much snow on its twigs — a perfect maze like a whirligig, though not in one solid mass — that you could not see through it. Sometimes the snow on the bent pitch pines made me think of rams' or elephants' heads, ready to butt you. In particular places, standing on their snowiest side, the woods were incredibly fair, white as alabaster. Indeed, the young pines reminded you of the purest statuary, and the stately full-grown ones towering around affected you as if you stood in a titanic sculptor's studio, so purely and delicately white, transmitting the light, their dark trunks all concealed. And in many places, where the snow lay on withered oak leaves between you and the light, various delicate fawn-colored and cinnamon tints, blending with the white, still enhanced the beauty.

I doubt if I can convey an idea[1] of the appearance of the woods yesterday, as you stood in their midst and looked round on their boughs and twigs laden

[1] This is Thoreau's conclusion after more than ten pages of attempted description of the beauty of Concord woods under their burden of snow. Needless to say, no photograph, or series of photographs, can be more successful. H. W. G.

with snow. It seemed as if there could have been none left to reach the ground. These countless zig-zag white arms crossing each other at every possible angle completely closed up the view, like a light drift within three or four rods on every side. The wintriest prospect imaginable.

Journal, VII, 122, 123, 128.

THE BROOK IN WINTER

JANUARY 12, 1855. Perhaps what most moves us in winter is some reminiscence of far-off summer. How we leap by the side of the open brooks! What beauty in the running brooks! What life! What society! The cold is merely superficial; it is summer still at the core, far, far within.

Journal, VII, 112.

JANUARY 31, 1852. I observed this afternoon, on the Turnpike, that where it drifts over the edge of a brook or a ditch, the snow being damp as it falls, what does not adhere to the sharp edge of the drift falls on the dead weeds and shrubs and forms a drapery like a napkin or a white tablecloth hanging down with folds and tassels or fringed border. Or perhaps the fresh snow merely rounds and whitens thus the old cores.

Journal, III, 260.

THE RIVER AS A WINTER HIGHWAY

JANUARY 20, 1856. It is now good walking on the river, for, though there has been no thaw since the snow came, a great part of it has been converted into snow ice by sinking the old ice beneath the water, and the crust of the rest is stronger than in the fields, because the snow is so shallow and has been so moist.

The river is thus an advantage as a highway, not only in summer and when the ice is bare in the winter, but even when the snow lies very deep in the fields. It is invaluable to the walker, being now not only the most interesting, but, excepting the narrow and unpleasant track in the highways, the only practicable route. The snow never lies so deep over it as elsewhere, and, if deep, it sinks the ice and is soon converted into snow ice to a great extent, beside being blown out of the river valley. Here, where you cannot walk at all in the summer, is better walking than elsewhere in the winter.

Journal, VIII, 121.

THE TRACKS OF A FOX

PERHAPS of all our untamed quadrupeds, the fox[1] has obtained the widest and most familiar reputation, from the time of Pilpay and Æsop to the present day. His recent tracks still give variety to a winter's walk. I tread in the steps of the fox that has gone before me by some hours, or which perhaps I have started, with such a tiptoe of expectation as if I were on the trail of the Spirit itself which resides in the wood, and expected soon to catch it in its lair. I am curious to know what has determined its graceful curvatures, and how surely they were coincident with the fluctuations of some mind. I know which way a mind wended, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks, and whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by their greater or less intervals and distinctness; for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace. Sometimes you will see the trails of many together, and where they have gamboled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in nature.

When I see a fox run across the pond on the snow, with the carelessness of freedom, or at intervals trace his course in the sunshine along the ridge of a hill, I give up to him sun and earth as to their true proprie-

[1] In spite of numerous fox-hunters, with their packs of trained hounds, Reynard manages to survive in Concord, and it is still true — though to a less degree than in Thoreau's day — that "his recent tracks give variety to a winter's walk." H. W. G.

tor. He does not go in the sun, but it seems to follow him, and there is a visible sympathy between him and it. Sometimes, when the snow lies light and but five or six inches deep, you may give chase and come up with one on foot. In such a case he will show a remarkable presence of mind, choosing only the safest direction, though he may lose ground by it. Notwithstanding his fright, he will take no step which is not beautiful. His pace is a sort of leopard canter, as if he were in no wise impeded by the snow, but were husbanding his strength all the while. He runs as though there were not a bone in his back.

Excursions, 117, 118.

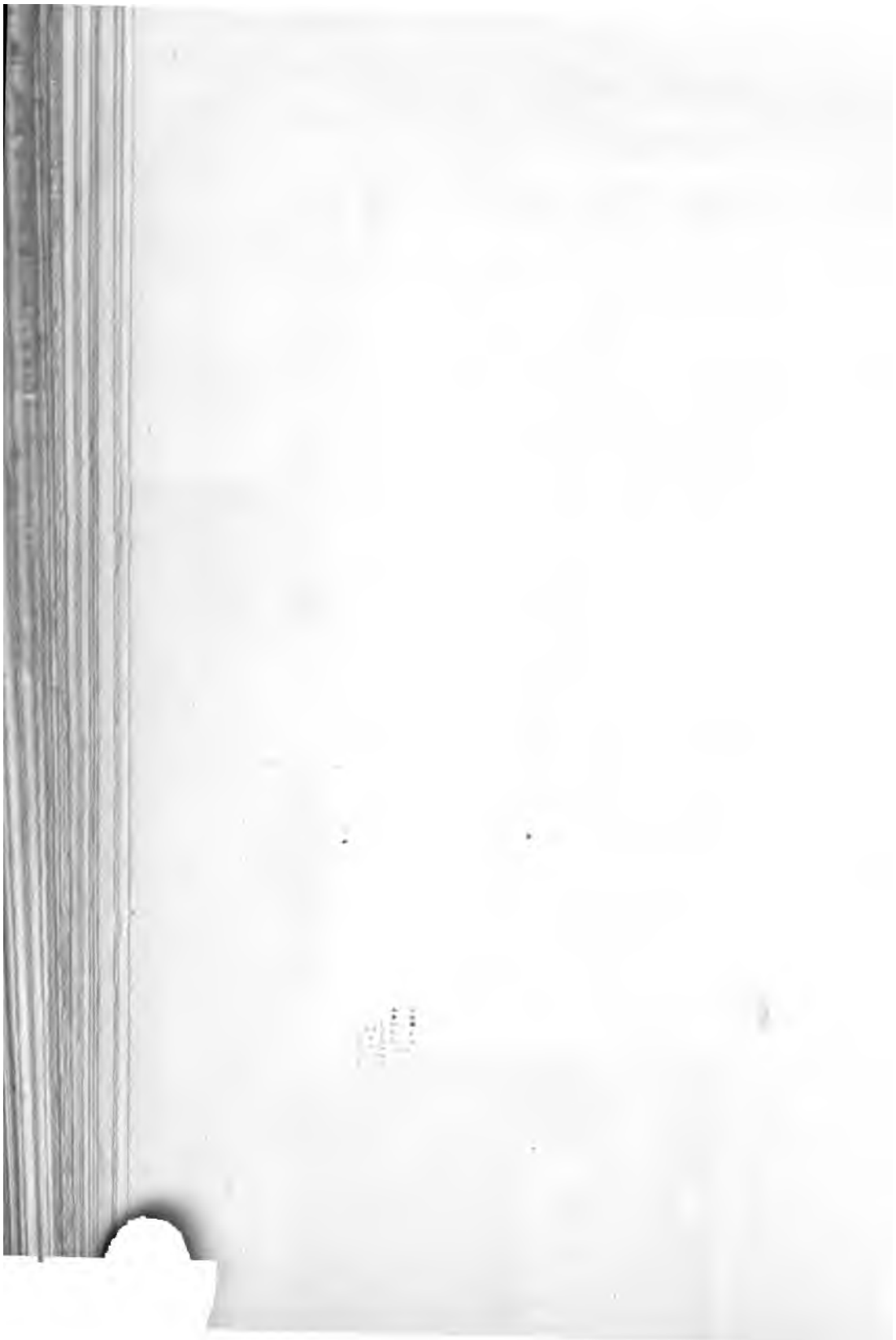
ICICLE "ORGAN-PIPES"

FEBRUARY 14, 1852. At the Cliffs, the rocks are in some places covered with ice; and the least inclination beyond a perpendicular in their faces is betrayed by the formation of icicles at once, which hang perpendicularly, like organ pipes, in front of the rock. They are now conducting downward the melting ice and snow, which drips from their points with a slight clinking and lapsing sound, but when the sun has set will freeze there and add to the icicles' length. Where the icicles have reached the ground and are like thick pillars, they have a sort of annular appearance, somewhat like the successive swells on the legs of tables and on bed-posts. There is perhaps a harmony between the turner's taste and the law of nature in this instance. The shadow of the water flowing or pulsating behind this transparent icy crust or these stalactites in the sun imparts a semblance of life to the whole.

Journal, III, 303.

NORTH BRANCH NEAR HARRINGTON'S

FEBRUARY 27, 1852. The main river is not yet open but in very few places, but the North Branch, which is so much more rapid, is open near Tarbell's and Harrington's, where I walked to-day, and, flowing with full tide bordered with ice on either side,



sparkles in the clear, cool air, — a silvery sparkle as from a stream that would not soil the sky.

Half the ground is covered with snow. It is a moderately cool and pleasant day near the end of winter. We have almost completely forgotten summer. This restless and now swollen stream has burst its icy fetters, and as I stand looking up it westward for half a mile, where it winds slightly under a high bank, its surface is lit up here and there with a fine-grained silvery sparkle which makes the river appear something celestial, — more than a terrestrial river, — which might have suggested that which surrounded the shield in Homer. If rivers come out of their icy prison thus bright and immortal, shall not I too resume my spring life with joy and hope? Have I no hopes to sparkle on the surface of life's current?

Journal, III, 322.

WINTER

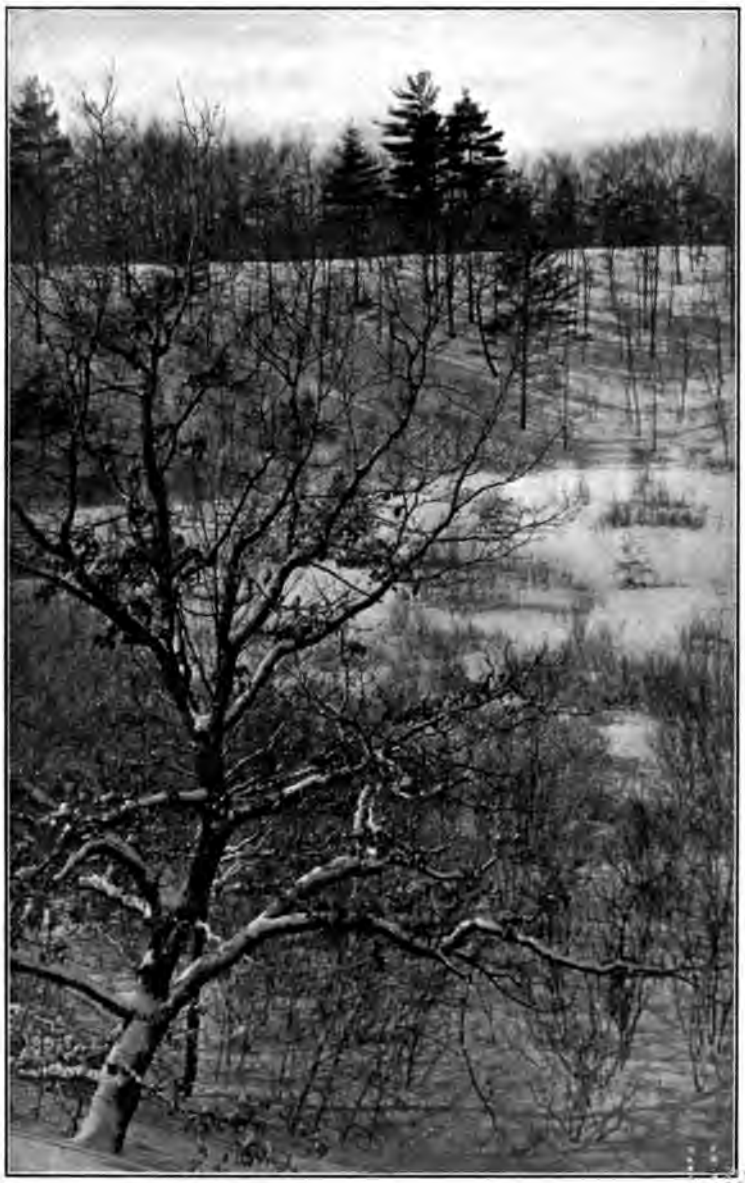
When winter fringes every bough
With his fantastic wreath,
And puts the seal of silence now
Upon the leaves beneath;

When every stream in its penthouse
Goes gurgling on its way,
And in his gallery the mouse
Nibbleth the meadow hay;

Methinks the summer still is nigh,
And lurketh underneath,
As that same meadow mouse doth lie
Snug in that last year's heath.

And if perchance the chickadee
Lisp a faint note anon,
The snow is summer's canopy,
Which she herself put on.

Fair blossoms deck the cheerful trees,
And dazzling fruits depend;
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,
The nipping frosts to fend,



Bringing glad tidings unto me,
The while I stand all ear,
Of a serene eternity,
Which need not winter fear.

Excursions, 176, 177.

DEC 2 2 1917